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FROM STORES OF MEMORY

Book by

IRVING BACHELLER

THE MASTER OF SILENCE  
THE STILL HOUSE OF O'DARROW  
EBEN HOLDEN  
D'RI AND I  
DARREL OF THE BLESSED ISLES  
VERGILIUS  
SILAS STRONG  
THE HAND MADE GENTLEMAN  
THE MASTER  
KEEPING UP WITH LIZZIE  
CHARGE IT  
THE TURNING OF GRIGGSBY  
MARRYERS  
THE LIGHT IN THE CLEARING  
KEEPING UP WITH WILLIAM  
A MAN FOR THE AGES  
THE PRODIGAL VILLAGE  
IN THE DAYS OF POOR RICHARD  
THE SCUDDERS  
FATHER ABRAHAM  
DAWN—A LOST ROMANCE OF THE TIME OF CHRIST  
COMING UP THE ROAD—THE STORY OF A NORTH COUNTRY BOYHOOD  
THE HOUSE OF THE THREE GANDERS  
A CANDLE IN THE WILDERNESS  
THE MASTER OF CHAOS  
UNCLE PEEL  
THE HARVESTING  
THE OXEN OF THE SUN  
A BOY FOR THE AGES  
FROM STORES OF MEMORY

# FROM STORES OF MEMORY

BY

IRVING BACHELLER

FARRAR & RINEHART

INCORPORATED

NEW YORK : : TORONTO



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## INTRODUCTION

### *A Word About Bacheller from His Friend Hamlin Garland*

IRVING BACHELLER is a typical American. On both sides of the family fireplace his people are of deep-rooted race, industrious, intellectual, God-fearing, and self-respecting. His sires were among those who conquered the New World forests, plowed its granite hills and drained its swamps. Born in a clearing in St. Lawrence County, New York State, this novelist not only keeps his native land in memory: he has put it imperishably into American fiction. In his poems and stories you may find the finest types and the best traditions of "The North Country."

Personally he is at once very strong and very gentle. Big of frame, slow-motioned yet athletic, he is a handsome and winning figure. His blond hair and mustache are now gray, but he retains his boyish smile and an absent-minded gentleness which must have been his most distinctive youthful characteristic. He has no hate of any man except of him who would wrong a child or dishonor a woman. He is too strong and too generous to have any petty animosities.

He is a home lover. He loves old-fashioned ballads, and sings them with a fine appreciation of their tender or heroic sentiment. A broad fireplace is his altar, a group of his friends his church. His conversation is never mean or careless or bitter. Everybody likes him, and yet he has few friends to whom he unfolds himself. His absent-minded

glance, though smiling, does not invite intimacy; his pre-occupation is very real. I have never known a kindlier nature than his.

As an orator he is notably successful. His voice, rather high in key, is pleasant and far-reaching, and a slightly drawling utterance lends appealing individuality to his eloquence. He always has something worth listening to.

His absent-mindedness is most entertaining to his friends but a serious matter to his wife. His paths are strewn with forgotten rubber shoes, silk umbrellas, and fur-lined overcoats. He is not to be trusted to bring home a package or to catch a train, and yet he has managed to accumulate a very considerable fortune. He has an enthusiasm for building things, for improving bare spots of earth. He lived for years in the neighborhood of Riverside, Connecticut, and he usually has a plan for a new house in his pocket. Now his home is in Florida.

His books are like him—poetic, gently humorous, quaint of fancy and entirely wholesome. They are all of the soil and people he loves so well. They have sold largely because they are full of manly generosity and the spirit of helpfulness, and because they contain pictures of a life that is passing or is already gone.

HAMLIN GARLAND



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## THE MAN ON THE HILLTOP

I WAS touring through New England. We were nearing the top of a hill overlooking a wide valley. Far below us we could see the smoke of villages and, nearer, spires and high windows glowing in the sunlight. We stopped by a small house for a look at the scene. A white-haired old man sat on its small veranda.

"Happy New Year!" he shouted, as I got out of the car to view the scene.

It was a June day and I was slow in answering.

"Ye know a New Year begins every mornin'," he said.

"Lived here long?" I asked.

"Couldn't 'a' lived here any longer if I'd tried. Born an' grew an' ripened right here. Now I've come to the time for rest but I don't rest too hard. I take it easy."

"You've seen some changes," I said.

"Changes? Say, mister, you've opened the preserve jar an' now ye can help yerself. I recollect when 'twas all woods down there in the valley. See that village 'bout half a mile below? I recollect when it started—meetin'house, store, blacksmith shop an' so on. Them days I was about knee-high to a johnnycake.

"Sunday we had to go down to the meetin'house an' be yelled at for hours. It was the yellin' time in history. We yelled at the sheep, the cows, an' the oxen. Ye know a yell was thought to be kind o' convincin'. Often ye could hear a man say 'whoa' a mile away.

"Things lasted so them days. Nothin' less than an

hour long an' ran from that to forever an' ever. The minister give us fair warnin' an' I tell ye we hung on to life hard as it was. No cards, no storybooks, no dancin'. Our fun was work—the huskin' bee, the apple parin', the raisin'. My mother would knit a sock leg in the course of an evenin's frolic. The boys an' gals was a little bit scared of each other. If a boy had been bad in school the teacher would make him set with one o' the gals, an' after that he was careful. We was 'fraid of our parents an' our parents was 'fraid o' the minister an' the minister—say, he was worse off than any of us. He had to save our souls or settle with the Lord.

"Ye know there's more ol' maids an' ol' bachelors here in New England than anywhere else. I'm one myself. Live here all 'lone with my sister. A human being was said to be a purty low down kind of a critter—just naturally sinful. We used to hear the minister read:

"'I have said to corruption, Thou art my father: to the worm, Thou art my mother.'

"An' then we'd git slapped in the face with this text: 'The stars are not pure in his sight. How much less man, that is a worm?'

"We had to look out for the early birds, I can tell ye. When a feller met a gal that he liked, why, o' course he kind o' hesitated about offerin' her a worm. Ye know I couldn't help feelin' kind o' flattered one day when a boy in the village called me a lobster.

"We had only four things to talk about: the sky, the ground, the neighbors—an' they wasn't many—an' ourselves—an' we wasn't much.

"Now an' then we got a new subject—the rheumatiz or the deviltry o' some o' the young folks. By an' by a railroad tore through the hills an' out across the valley. Say, 'twas like a pipe from the big reservoir o' the world.

Everything begun to move faster. We swapped the ox for the hoss an' the scythe for the mowin' machine. Time increased in value an' had become an important part of eternity. Yes, sir, we begun to think less an' talk less about eternity. More folks, more things to talk about. We turned the woods into money. We could sell what we raised at a good price.

"We trimmed our hair an' mowed off our whiskers. Woods an' hair go together an' that's as sure as the fur on a bear's back. I knew some men who moved into the village an' cut a swath right through the middle o' their whiskers an' left a kind of a fence o' hair on both sides o' their faces. Some would trim 'em down to a patch on the chin for a kind of a weather vane."

"And an aid to reflection," I suggested.

"That's it. I knew a man that always grabbed an' twitched 'em when he was thinkin'. One man who moved to Boston had come back with a patch on his lower lip 'bout the size of a trigger on a shotgun. He bought the ol' farm an' a lot more land an' built a mansion. We used to call him Bill. Always looked at yer neck when he talked to ye. Folks used to call him the inspector of Adam's apples. They've got two children an' a hired mother for 'em an' twenty-four dogs an' ten hosses an' six automobiles. Every summer day you'll see Bill whackin' a little white ball over the hills on the ol' farm. Well, Bill got used to hard knocks on that farm. Every fall Bill an' his friends an' his dogs an' his hosses go tearin' an' bellerin' over the hills an' fences in pursuit o' happiness an' I hear that they ain't ketched her yit. Still I don't blame 'em. What's fun for one man may look kind o' curious to another.

"'Course there's a lot o' foolishness. I guess we was just as foolish when I was young but in a different way. That's

one thing the world was made for—to give a man a chance to go in for any kind o' behavior he likes best. If we git too foolish we have to suffer."

My notes on that talk were made forty years ago. The World War and other great changes have come. I am now the Man on the Hilltop myself. I shall try to be as cheerful and illuminating as this old Yankee of long ago. For the things I have written I claim only that no one is the worse for having read them.

## PART I

RELATING TO CHARACTERS AND EVENTS WHICH  
HAVE SHAPED MY MANHOOD





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## 1. ONE OF THE LAST PURITANS

### *Which is the Story of the Beginning and Development of a Great Friendship*

WHEN I was a small boy Sunday was a day of sadness. I had to keep quiet and be good. It was a difficult undertaking. If I failed in it I was in danger of being captured and carried off by the Sunday Man. No child had ever seen him, but I did some worrying about this bugaboo.

If it was summertime there would be much snoring in the house, for it was a day of rest and I had no need of rest. Even the chickens seemed to step softly. Only the old cock had the courage to defy the Sunday Man. In the afternoon the older boys would go off for cherries or berries, but they would not have me with them. I would follow but they would run and hide and get away from me.

I had seen only about half an acre of the world and I had some curiosity as to the mysteries beyond the walls and fences. One Sunday I tried to follow them but had to give up. Brokenhearted and weary I came back and lay down in the tall grass near the cheese house and went to sleep and for a time was a lost child. While my mother and sisters and the maid were calling and searching in a panic, I dimly remember dreaming that I was on the back of the Sunday Man and that he was going to show me where the Echoes lived, on the top of the wooded ledge in front of our house. The dream would have been quite forgotten save for the fact that I told my mother about it. Often I had heard the Echoes when the older children stood shout-

ing at the day's end. In that singular fashion I had converted the Sunday Man into a friend and was no longer afraid of him.

I recall that my mother agreed that the Sunday Man would never harm anyone.

As a child I liked the whistling of the winter wind in the chimney and around the gables. I liked the hiss of the driven snow. In the summer I even enjoyed a noisy thunderstorm, for it afforded an exciting contrast to the stillness of the scene. We had a merry lot of birds in the maple trees. I loved their singing, and my mother used to say that they sang because they loved children. It seemed to be a compliment to me.

The birds were no happier than I. I used to sit in my small rocking chair and sing. I knew the words of no song, so I invented a string of rhythmic, meaningless words which I remember to this day. They served to carry a rapid hustle of notes which I had learned by listening to the country fiddler who came to us for a day or two now and then. With what a riot of merry music he filled the house! I thought that I was some person myself, but he humbled me. I knew that Dr. Goss, with the interesting odor of drugs in his clothing, was a great man but even he had fallen.

I amused myself by drawing cats and dogs on a slate from models that my mother had made. I would show them to her and she would make some remark like this:

"That cat is bobtailed and angry. She must have had a fight with a dog and I guess he bit off her tail."

She would rub out my drawing and I would try again.

I conceived a great love for my mother. If she was ill, I was deeply grieved. She was mainly very gentle with me, but I was no angel of the household and now and then

I felt the impact of the slipper. It always ended in a soothing talk. I cannot remember that I ever heard a scolding word in the house.

My father was a jolly man and quite an athlete. He would hold a broomstick in front of him and jump over it between his hands, backward and forward, for my amusement. I knew then that he was the greatest of all men. He was also gentle with me, but when it was necessary he could be severe.

My father was superintendent of the poor, and interesting characters began to come to our house; when I was ten years old I wrote of the peculiarities of some of them, to the great amusement of my father. My mother would say with a smile that it was very good. She gently and wisely discussed with me every misstep and problem of my boyhood. She got books and magazines for me to read and paid me to commit passages to memory. I began to develop a fondness for good reading and a sense of the power of words.

There were great men in the village of Canton those days. Ebenezer Fisher was one of them. I went to hear his lecture on Tyndale. The great stature, deep voice and personality of the man thrilled me. No doubt it was the mysterious power of his personality that sent me to his home one day. I wanted to see him again and to feel his hand. As an excuse for the call I had some question to ask. I do not remember what it was. I found him just a kindly old gentleman. I know now that such a man is a very different human being when he is on his feet before a crowd and the great lamp of his soul is lighted.

Our minister, Dr. Isaac M. Atwood, was a great man. He had a powerful, well-trained voice, capable of exquisite notes and an imagination. His sermons were like a noble bit of music. That kind of thing appeals to the

young. I never missed a chance to hear him and even now I rate him as one of the greatest of American pulpiteers.

There were other great men in the little town, especially A. G. Gaines, to whom its young were incalculably indebted.

I would not give the impression that I sought only inspiration in the days of my youth. There were bad boys who told me of new things. I wanted to know about them. I sowed some wild oats. But always I had to settle with my mother. I had become a rather ingenious liar, but my mother was an expert detective. For every lie an hour of serious and kindly reckoning was ahead of me. She knew that undiscovered secrets in a boy's breast are like rats in a house. They breed. Somehow she knew all about it and her talk would floor me. I had to keep right with her, because—well, because of my deep love for her. A tear in her eye was worse than a lash on my back. With me folly didn't pay. I took to another type of dissipation.

One day I heard a young man repeat the lines:

"Were I hard-favored, foul, or wrinkled-old,  
Ill-nurtur'd, crooked, churlish, harsh in voice,  
O'erworn, despised, rheumatic and cold,  
Thick-sighted, barren, lean and lacking juice,  
Then mightst thou pause, for then I were not for thee;  
But having no defects, why dost thou abhor me?"

The lines amused me and I asked who wrote them.

"Shakespeare," he answered.

The next day I went to Jewett's bookstore and bought for seventy-five cents *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare* in one volume of execrably fine print. In the next year I read nearly all the plays and committed many of the great passages. Here were adventures more thrilling than any I had known. My mother shared them with me.

Shakespeare's arrival in my poor intellect was, for me, an important event. About that time a wonderful friendship began between me and my mother. Friendship is perhaps a curious relation to exist between mother and son, but that is the fitting word.

When I was in my third year in college our little flock had scattered. Some had gone to the long home. My oldest sister was teaching in Minnesota. My father had met with reverses and was rarely with us. My mother and I lived alone together in the house in town. We were poor. We had enough to eat and decent clothing, but I rarely had even a quarter of a dollar in my pocket. On Saturdays I could earn a dollar posting the books of some businessman. In summer I hoed the garden.

I had become a recognized force in college. There were things that I could do certainly as well as any other student, but it was a small college and so the credit I claim is not large. Still I had the respect of the faculty and of an able lot of boys and girls. This was accomplished by hard work.

My mother knew all about my successes but said nothing. She never praised me but she had a way of touching my face with her hand, now and then, that told me of her satisfaction and her fondness.

It was a noble friendship that I enjoyed with this wise and gentle woman, who was my mother—a descendant of John Alden and his wife Priscilla. That fact helps to explain the word "friendship." She had the restrained spirit of the elder race. Gushing emotionalism was not for them. Yet they had a depth of feeling proved by the sternest acts of sacrifice. This is also true: they were quite as reserved in expressing aversion or contempt. It was likely to be veiled. Their talent for understatement has created a school of humor.

I remember she once said of a foolish neighbor:

"He has wandered from wisdom about as far as he can go. He's near the end of the road."

That for her was a severe verdict.

I love to think of those days when she and I were alone together. What hours of deep emotion and inspiration passed as we read aloud to each other the magic words of some great master! In the morning I was awakened by her singing as she began the work of the day. Generally it was the hymn "Tell me the old, old story." The sound of her voice gladdened me. I would arise and take a sponge bath at the basin. Before I was quite dressed she would come in with a cheery greeting and say that breakfast was ready.

The memory of that time is so dear to me that I have no words fit to tell of it. The deep, still water of our life had a smooth surface. Our affection was a subtle, covered thing. We did not try to put it into words and kissing was a gesture quite unnecessary. I do not remember that she ever kissed me. Trollope would have asked that matter so intimate be published after his death, but such affectation is to me more offensive than the truth.

My senior year came along. Months in advance I began to prepare for my oration. My theme was to be "The Attic Drama," of which I had gained some knowledge from Bohn's *Classical Library*. I read thoughtfully the vivid translations of some of the tragedies of Euripides, Aeschylus, and Sophocles. I studied the lectures of Von Schlegel and other distinguished authorities. In three months I knew my theme and its relations well enough to begin writing.

The day of my final test had come. It was a lovely June day. The big hall was crowded. When I came to the platform, I saw my mother and father sitting about half-

way up the slant. For their sake I must do my best, and I did. When I left the stage I knew that I had made my point.

As I was going out many people shook my hand. Among them were my mother and father. They said little, but I could feel the thing beyond their words.

On the street I met one of our old hired men. "Ye done grand," he said. "There wa'n't no darn fool like me could tell what ye was talkin' about."

Extravagant things were said and written of that humble effort of mine, which was nothing more or less than the work of a boy who had the sense and energy to be prepared for his task. I had to do that with my mother and father looking on. I had a big debt to pay to them. In spite of all the ill luck, after that day they were happy people.

Within a year my father was gone. My mother lived with my married sister in Canton. Often I went back to her. The editor of the Lothrop Publishing Company of Boston has written:

In July 1900 Eben Holden came out and the sales were soon very large. One hundred and five thousand were shipped to the trade in a week. By Christmas time the sales had reached three hundred thousand and the book has been selling ever since. Even now, thirty-eight years after publication, about one thousand a year are sold. What the sales have been no one can tell. The book was not copyrighted in Europe and there and in the colonies it had a large sale. In a sixpenny edition it went to many printings. Here is one of the few books that is in the million list.

This seems to indicate that at last I had pleased a larger audience than had ever assembled in the old Town Hall. Proudly I took the book to my mother. For two days she sat reading it. Often I saw her laughing quietly.

Then she put her hand gently on my brow and said it was very good. She was still afraid of spoiling me.

One of the last puritans was she.

1 1 1

Now a word as to the lesson of all this.

I was prepared to believe Bishop Anderson who once said to me: "I came into boyhood with the ineffable child love for my mother and father. It came no doubt from their patience, their gentle hands and voices. It is one of the biggest things in human life. It comes, if it comes at all, before one is six years of age. It's bigness lies in the fact that it helps to fashion one's love for his wife and his regard for all men. I pity the child who never gets it and I wonder how one can get it with a hired mother."

In America the home has suffered many changes. When I was a boy its main object was the making of men and women. I regret that I am not a better example. A considerable part of our population inhabits flats and apartments, while men and women give their time largely to the imperative demands of business and social dissipation.

I sometimes fear that the result of this will be the hard-boiled type of boy and girl to whom divorce will not be a serious matter. I suppose that there is much to be said for the hard-boiled attitude. It is doubtless a help to one in the acquisition of wealth. It is somewhat in line with the English method of rearing children. It should be said, however, that their nurses are people of character and let us not forget that the home of our old democracy furnished an inspiration to the mind of childhood that gave us many of our best men, while in Europe we learn rarely of a great man who has risen from the ranks.



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## 2. THE COUNTRY OF MY BOYHOOD AND ITS CHANGE

### *Of Which I Have Written and Where I Was Born*

I AM often surprised by the increasing number of things that I don't know, but northern New York is not one of them. From hoeing I got a considerable depth of knowledge while young. In time I began to suspect that the pen was mightier than the hoe. Then some people began to think that I was "a good feller but that I wasn't good for anything else."

They were sometimes wrong I discovered when I began another kind of digging. I got a bigger yield to the acre out of its moral and intellectual soil than ever from its ground.

Until the middle of the nineteenth century northern New York was a remote frontier. It had many features of unusual interest. There were the old manor houses of the Van Rensselaers and the Ogdens and that of George Parish—the Baron von Seftonburg—the most dashing and romantic figure in the land; there were the abandoned estates of the Count de Chaumont and the Baroness de Ferriet and of Joseph Bonaparte—that brother of Napoleon who had been King of Spain; there was the most beautiful and tremendous water highway on the continent, down which came the forests of the farther west in great rafts on their way to the mills; there, too, was a howling wilderness. Many a time in my boyhood I have heard it howl in the voices of wolf and panther. A won-

derful place it was, with its many lakes and ponds; with its ancient green trails, its wild life, its mighty hunters. Going down the Raquette or the Oswegatchie or the St. Regis forty years ago, one had to take off his hat to the beauty of the world, although he may never have done the like, for here were rivers walled and often roofed with pine and birch and tamarack, and bordered with lilies; and there were torches of blue iris flaming above the reeds, and wild roses crowding to the water's edge.

Most of the inhabitants of this part of the valley of the St. Lawrence got there in the westward movement from northern Vermont. They were a hardy race of men. Their fathers had been the Green Mountain Boys—a daring lot of raiders, woodchoppers, and fighting men. They had had many enemies, the greatest of whom was the Devil, but these were worn out rapidly. They were almost wasteful in their use of enemies, but, of course, they knew where they could get others and felt that they could afford this one extravagance. They came over the mountains and through the woods with their families in ox carts and wagons. The old feather beds and some few sacred articles of furniture were in the carts and wagons with a kettle and a frying pan, and some corn meal. The old family musket, with a barrel so long that one had to back up for a shot if the game was near him, furnished meat for the journey. Often they drove a cow along so that they might have her milk with the pudding. It was a hard trip, with much breaking down by the way.

Early in the last century a traveler on the old Chateaugay trail met a man going west with his oxcart. One of the wheels had been broken, and the mover was mending it. His wife lay sick on a feather bed, under a bark lean-to. His children were shivering in the cold rain. In spite of all this the man was singing as he worked. He

greeted the newcomer with a merry jest, and the latter said to him:

"My friend, how in God's name do you manage to keep so cheerful?"

"I've got to," said the mover in a low tone as he paused in his task. "Ye see, I've got to make them believe we're havin' a good time, an' it keeps me awful busy. Today I can hardly believe it myself."

That was an example of the man who settled the St. Lawrence Valley in northern New York. They were mostly a cheerful lot, simply because they had to be. The man was usually responsible for the moving. The wife was the conservative member of the family who had dreaded to leave the old neighborhood for the life of a pioneer, and had tried to hold him back. So, it had been up to him to make her believe, if possible, that pioneering was fun. He sang, he told stories, he invented jokes, he laughed even when his courage was broken. He built his cabin of logs and battened it with moss and roofed it with rough-hewn troughs, and windowed it with greased paper, and began to clear away the woods, burning the trees as they fell. The ashes were his only source of income, for he could leach water through them and boil down the lye into black salts which were much in demand.

Shut in by the mountains and the forest on the south and east, and the water boundary of an alien land on the north and west, he kept the dialect and customs of his fathers. I remember well the mental boundaries of these people in my youth. In the east was history, in the west mystery, in the north the British, in the south the Democratic party, while above them was a difficult heaven, and beneath them a wide-open and capacious hell. It was natural, I suppose, that they should indulge in profanity as well as in prayer, and I knew good men who were pro-

ficient in both directions. There were miles of whiskers in the valley those days, and nowhere was the head of the Yankee more fertile inside or outside. The men rested now and then to swap horses and stories and political opinions, but the women were always busy, it seemed to me. They were a wonderful race of women—each a spinner, a weaver, a knitter, a sewer, a tailor, a cook, a washer-woman, a nurse, a doctor, a wise and tender mother. They went to the neighbors for a visit or an evening of frolic, now and then, but their hands were busy even while they played, and they would knit half a stocking in the course of their fun.

Their lives were lonely. They were often thinking of the old friends and beloved scenes they had left forever, and yet they were not more than a hundred miles from them—a journey so long and difficult that they dared to think of it only in dreams. They found diversion in work. They worked and saved and sang of rest, but never seemed to be taking it. Their songs were streaked with the note of melancholy. It was like the sound of the wind in the chimney on a cold day. I used to hear them singing, in my youth, that old lyric which Robinson Crusoe was said to have sung in his loneliness:

Society, friendship, and love,  
Divinely bestowed upon man,  
Oh, had I the wings of a dove,  
How soon would I taste you again!

A few books, the *Weekly Tribune*, *Ballou's Magazine*, *Our Boys and Girls*, edited by Oliver Optic, afforded most of their amusement and consolation. The characters of Dickens and Ann Stephens, the adventures of Daniel Boone and David Livingstone, the sermons of Bushnell and Beecher, the wisdom of Horace Greeley came into the

glow of the evening lamp and entered their thoughts and dreams.

These people had to do their own sowing and reaping and threshing and milling (largely with tools of their own manufacture), their own building and mending, and with it all they had learned to do their own thinking—a highly important accomplishment. Taking thought for the morrow was the price of life. The self-made thinkers were on every frontier. The best came to be fairly well known: Wright, Webster, Lincoln, Grant, Greeley, Mark Twain.

So the people of our “north country” lived and fought the good fight. The railroad came in the middle fifties, and the young people began to break away from the farms. Some of the young men went west or down to the oil fields in Pennsylvania. Some went away to school, living in a small room and boarding themselves. Some returned in fine boots and store clothing, with cigars in their mouths and silver in their pockets, and in their satchels a new kind of fruit called “bananas.” They told of wonderful adventures and narrow escapes; of a hundred dollars a month and such fabulous earnings. There was no holding the young men after that. Sundry big schools had been established in near-by villages. A college had opened north of the woods. Ministers and professors began to tell of the power of learning in the district schoolhouses. Everybody wanted to sell out and go west, but in those days one might as well try to sell a corner lot on Mars as a farm seven miles from the railroad. Many rented and moved to the towns to educate their children. Naturally, the farms began to run down.

I remember returning to the scenes of my youth some thirty years ago. The old farm had been sold and resold and mortgaged and remortgaged. It was in the hands of

a new American, who was willing to live on what he could not sell. He stood on the half-ruined porch looking at me as I drove in.

"Hello," said I.

"Hello," said he. "Who be you?"

I told him.

"They tell me you've done noble down there," said he.

"How've you done?" I asked.

"Jest livin'—farmin' is played out," he answered.

"Quit it," said I.

"Can't," said he.

"Why not?" said I.

"Mortgaged," said he. "What'll I do?"

"You look as if you might die without trying very hard," I suggested.

"Can't," said he.

"Why not?" said I.

"Mortgaged," said he. "With my wife and children I ain't no right to die."

At that moment there drove in a man who for many years had held mortgages on every acre of the countryside. The tenant introduced me.

"If your father had kept you here, this farm wouldn't look as it does now," the newcomer said to me.

"No," said the tenant. "If he'd stayed here the farm would have looked better, but he'd have looked a damn sight worse."

A good bit of the physical and psychological situation of that time and country is in this anecdote, and a thing to be remembered is this: the people had a sense of humor which misfortune could not destroy.

It has been fifty-seven years since I left the land of Eben Holden. It is the chief milkshed of the continent. Every morning in early summer a million quarts of milk

go speeding down to the metropolis—a great life-giving river. Without this daily flood New York would be in a panic.

The cow is the backbone of the north country, as this region has been called since my story of its life was published. The sleek, handsome herds scattered over its vivid green flats and hillsides, the peace and color of its landscapes have delighted me. My trained eyes have now, perhaps, a keener appreciation of its sunny, well-grassed slopes, of its shapely hawthorns, of its gray rock ledges, of its fifty-mile vistas, cut with shining ribbons of blue water.

But the changes fill me with amazement. Every township is crossed by concrete highways. In two directions they enter the deep wilderness and break through to the clearings beyond. There are those who in toiling over its trails have envied the speed and clear pathway of the eagle. Now they have and use them. Only the initiated know of the riches we have almost abandoned in that great treasure house—the voices, the silences, the shapes, the colors, the odors, the innumerable, ever-changing types of beauty, the songs that seemed, somehow, to give wings to the imagination of the traveler and to lift him out of the sordid world he knew. What a lesson in seeing and listening was in that vast, lonely, shadowed theater! What healing in the toil of lungs and feet! How sweet the taste of the mountain brook as we rested by its singing waters! Now we roar along the concrete highways and think we are seeing the forest.

The new roads and the motorcars that rush over them have had a singular effect on the small villages which were prosperous in my boyhood, each with stores, a population of several hundred persons, and a thriving hotel. One summer my wife and I began to think of the old coun-

tryside and village I had known in my youth; of its Main Street where traffic halted soon after the sun went down, and the voices of the night were those of crickets and katydids. The call was insistent and we answered it. Our rooms and bath in this country town were inviting with nearly every accessory to which we had been accustomed. Here, too, were willing hands and friendly faces.

My wife's room had two large windows overlooking Main Street and another that commanded the river view. Night came on. Along the street below was a solid line of parked cars. The weather was warm. We put out the lights, opened the windows and went to bed with a grateful sense of comfort. We were weary and soon asleep.

I was awakened about half past eleven by a persistent grinding in the street below. It was the nagging sound of three or four aged and infirm self-starters. Soon one of them set the engine in a roar broken by terrific bursting snorts. Being a horseman, I have heard some snorts in my time, but these had the combined abdominal power of forty horses behind them. Then the acceleration lasted for minutes during which the tortured engine was like a lion at bay. Each cylinder and spark plug complained as it went off with an uproar that would have put a locomotive to shame. One starter, coaxed for half an hour, failed to connect and half a dozen laughing boys and girls pushed the disabled car to an all-night garage for expert attention. The reluctant starters continued their grinding and the snort and roar of carbonized engines kept us awake until after two o'clock. All this was a curious echo of new customs. We might as well have been trying to sleep on the sidewalk. It was as if the lounge, the bureau and the chiffonier had gone tumbling about the room on a spree.



"Crickets and katydids!" my wife exclaimed in a hysterical tone. "Lord! What a place!"

"The farmer boys have all gone home," I said. "We can sleep now."

Indeed, the town was quiet at last. We did sleep. We slept nearly half an hour, when two cars came racing down the street with defiant yells from the drivers. The engines were not less excited than the men. They made a mile-wide streak of terrifying sound in the night. My wife began to express herself in language more or less emotional.

"I'm sorry," I answered. "Main Street has got some new habits since I was a boy."

Again we sailed off in quiet water on the slumber sea. It was a short trip. Soon after six o'clock a big motor truck, loaded with live veal, parked under our windows. The veal began to advertise its hunger and discomfort with a chorus of loud protesting blats. Is there any sound so penetrating as the voice of youthful and distressed bovinity? No doubt the driver had halted for breakfast. In half an hour we were off this shoal of misery and on our way again.

Now, the very modern children of the proprietor, whom we regarded with a degree of affection and admiration, were a lively lot. How often I have observed that in a country town rumination is apt to have a whistling accompaniment. The bright boy of twelve came up the stairs whistling a lively tune with upper notes of singular penetration. I think that people who have spent the greater part of fifty years in New York would regard whistling indoors as a pernicious and disturbing type of activity. The siren voice of the fire engine at midnight is no worse. It woke me and in a moment four children were noisily chasing each other in the big hall beyond our doors.

The day had come and they were innocently trying to amuse themselves. So we decided to call it a night. It was no easy matter to decide to pack our trunks and move. We were not disposed to give up.

The Main Street hotel proprietor has improved in taste and cultivation since I was a boy. But he is a little like the motorcars we had heard. His engine is tired and in need of attention.

I began my literary career as the editor of a hotel newspaper. It became necessary for me to study the art followed by certain successful men in the management of crowded caravansaries. Every week I was in touch with Uriah Welch of the St. Nicholas, Charles Koerner of the Everett, Horace Brockway of the Ashland, Samuel Kiefer of the Grand Central, Mr. Leland of the Sturtevant, Mr. Witherbee of the Windsor and other bonifaces who had carried the art to a high degree of perfection.

To my astonishment I learned that most of these men went to market every morning at an early hour to pass personally on every important item in the day's supplies. I learned further that they were often in the kitchen and pantries looking after the preparation of the food and its service, the condition of floors, refrigerators, stoves and dishes, the dress and appearance of the force. The kitchen was the keystone of the structure. Guests were invited to go there. The comfort and contentment of the guest was an object of ceaseless study.

Most country hotel men still go on in the century-old rut. They dress well. They make genial observations about the weather and do nothing but smile and receive the cash. Their marketing is done by the chore boy. Their kitchens are sloppy and unclean. The "fresh" vegetables have been loafing in the refrigerator for days. They have swapped flavors. The onions and the cucumbers taste alike.

These men forget that the world is constantly passing their doors and longing for comfort and good food. Often I have had to wonder why in summer, surrounded by thousands of acres of productive land, fresh vegetables rarely get to their tables. Still, our host was in many respects an exceptional country innkeeper.

That day we had a restful and pleasant ride in the sunlit hills and valleys. We came back in a better mood. We ate our supper and sat smoking and watching the fading colors of the western sky reflected on the quiet river surface. Suddenly, as night fell, we heard wild whoops and yells of triumph and shrieks of fright and despair. The children of the neighborhood had stealthily gathered on the darkened lawn and were now engaged in an Indian raid. It was like the descent of the Mohawks on Cherry Valley. We fled to our rooms. We closed the windows and amused ourselves awhile with backgammon. Nine o'clock came. The raid was over. We got ready for bed.

"Let's close the windows and keep out the giddy whirl of Main Street," I proposed. "We'll get air enough under these high ceilings."

My wife wouldn't stand for it. Two windows had to be open. We fell asleep and in about half an hour were awakened by the murmuring and yelping of saxophones on the veranda just below one of our open windows. Soon they were in full cry. A dance had begun there and we could hear many voices of happy, carefree youth. I turned on a light and came out of my room laughing.

"You may think it's funny, but I don't," my wife complained. "This is what you call the sweet, quiet, restful, delightful country. Gosh! Take me back to Park or Lexington Avenue. 'Fresh fruits and vegetables!' And

men coming into the dining room in their shirt sleeves! Lord! Take me back."

She was a born New Yorker. She had no toleration for shirt sleeves. She didn't understand them. What could I say? I had coaxed her into this trouble.

"Well," I said, "the old place ain't what it used to be. Cheer up. We'll start for Maine tomorrow."

The dance continued until one o'clock. The young of the country are as eagerly in pursuit of pleasure as those of the great towns. The big towns set the fashion in living and the country-bred youngsters are keeping up with the procession. As to the cost of it, well, worry has become a habit in every countryside and "for one night more let's forget it; we've not long to be young anyhow." They do not stay at home as they used to. Why? Motorcars. They can easily go many miles after supper to a dance.

Tomorrow arrived but we did not move. My wife was ill and I in disgrace. The doctor said he would come right away. He did not come for hours. Is it because a good country doctor is now so much in demand that he finds it difficult to keep his appointments? I know that I, having a sense of responsibility for everything that happened in the place, suffered with a feeling of guilt for his delinquency.

Every day at a certain hour the great transcontinental busses met under our windows going east and west. They had some grade to make going either way from the foot of Main Street. They were long and ponderous. They started with bursting roars that continued for half a minute. It was like artillery practice.

"Crickets and katydids!" my wife would exclaim as they went away.

The telephone was often ringing. Readers of mine

wished to see and greet me. Anyone who has the courage to read my books excites my sympathy. Always I went down to see them. Often they had literary ambition and had written stories which they wished me to read.

One day the clerk announced that a cousin of mine wanted to see me. I went down. A man who looked like a tramp sat in a remote corner of the office. He was the seedy remnant of a noble race—the son of one of my many cousins. His father was a distinguished citizen of the old time, his great-uncle had been an honored general in the Civil War. He asked me if I would kindly lend him a dollar.

"No," I said. "But I will gladly give you a dollar."

He took it and went away. Poor man! It certainly was a country that differed much from the land I had known. Here was an extremist of the don't-worry party. Are they all headed his way?

The merchants and bankers in the old towns of from three to five thousand people are now immensely worried. The leading banker in the village said to me:

"We have got to pay a good part of the cost of these long concrete highways. It will take many years to do it. Our people are overburdened with taxes. Every day I listen to pathetic appeals for cash. What is the effect of these highways? Our people do less and less of their trading at home. They can go away to the big cities and see life and buy their goods cheaper. Many of our shops are going into the hands of foreigners who can dine on an onion and a hunk of bread. Have we bought at an extravagant figure the thing that is going to destroy us? The small villages are already dead. One could not borrow fifty dollars on a house that may have cost ten thousand. Is that a portent of what is going to happen even in these larger towns? We are all worried."

These villages are dying. Mr. A. Barton Hepburn, who for many years had an influence in the banking world next to that of the elder Morgan, came from one of these little villages. It is up the Raquette near the edge of the big woods, and is called Colton. His brother, a man over eighty years of age, still lives there. I found him in his little shop behind the house. It was a silent house. The wife had moved to the cemetery, the daughter lived in Potsdam. It was one of a string of perhaps forty neat, small houses, all occupied. The hotel, the mills, the stores—all save one were gone. The head of "Teak" Hepburn, as he is called in the north country—his voice, his smile, his humor—reminded me of his distinguished brother.

"Colton is not the village it was in the old time," I said.

He rose from his chair and brought to me a small section of a beaver log gnawed to a point. "That was done right here in the village," he said. "The beavers have moved in. They are now our neighbors."

The town story is like those of many other places. The clinking anvil and the brawny leather-aproned men are gone. The big mill fed on the timber of the forest. Its food gave out and it died. The grist mill couldn't stand the competition of the steel rollers in Minneapolis. With broad, smooth roads leading to large towns and motor-cars available on installments, the people could do their buying in the larger towns with a greater variety of goods to choose from. There they found many stores. Women could enjoy shopping—that beloved dissipation which is one of the mysteries to the masculine mind. They could see life and get material for conversation. There were temptations, and temptations are dear to most people. They could slip into the "movie" show with the children for thirty cents each. "Fair time" comes every week these

days. The Colton folk can now get to Potsdam, ten miles away, in about fifteen minutes. What could the local shops do but close their doors? So Colton has become a place where a few people lodge in the homes they inherited. It is a remote suburb of the large towns.

There is no demand for its land and houses. It has its Hepburn library and its church where a missionary comes to preach. It has its full-flowing, picturesque Raquette River, but unless some miracle should happen it is a doomed village. I could name many villages that are in a like situation.

The old spirit, now not quite at home, is in these words of Teak Hepburn:

"My wife and I had no plan for reforming the world. We lived here quietly for more than half a century. We kept our hands busy. In the evening we read books and newspapers or visited with the neighbors. We were happy and contented. When she got sick and I knew she was going to leave me I said to her:

" 'Well, mother, you and I have jogged up the road together a good many years. If you're going away I wish you'd take me along.' "

"It was like the family going off with no room for the small boy in the wagon.

"I live here all alone now. Sometimes I go away to visit my daughter. Stay a week or two and get homesick. Come back and fuss around here awhile and get lonesome. Then I go back to see her. So my life swings between loneliness and homesickness."

All this he said with the cheerful face of a good sport. He is one of the great characters of the north country—a philosopher, an artist who can mount a buck's head with a startling fidelity to nature. He is a man sound to the core. Yet he belongs to another time. He is the last

of his kind. For weeks I have been searching for men of the old type. They are nearly all gone. The shrewd, quaintly humorous philosopher, to whom the life of the far world was a mystery that stirred his imagination and was a source of amusement to him, is passing out. There are characters, but they are tarred with conventional manners and ambitions. They lack the great and noble gifts of imagination that gave to the old-timers humor and originality.

I have set down a part of the price that my native land has paid for the roads and the motorcars. They have killed the small villages and made one man like another. The needed costs of building and repairing have doubled taxes, and this burden will be on the necks of the generations to come.

Thirty-eight years ago I asked Andrew Carnegie to give a library to the town where I went to school as a boy.

"I'll give as large a library as the town needs if it will vote ten per cent of the cost as its annual fund for maintenance," he answered.

I was able to offer the town a \$30,000 building. This was refused on the ground that it would be unjust to burden posterity with an annual tax of \$3,000.

Such was the sensitive conscience and the conservative spirit of that time. The conscience of today would seem to have no such tender regard for future generations.

The automobile came along. The horses seemed to recognize it as a natural enemy. They began to rear and plunge into the ditches. A man who set out on the road with a team took his life in his hands. A war began between gas and horse power. Gas won. Then an able and organized movement against the old, conservative spirit of America set in. It employed the most skillful salesmen. The horse was doomed. Therefore every householder must



have a motorcar. It would cost more than all the horses he owned. How could he pay for it?

"Easily," the salesman answered. "We'll sell you a good car on the installment plan. It will quicken the pace of your life and increase your earning power. In a year it will save time enough to pay for it."

It was a good argument. The farmer might hesitate, but soon or late he must fall in line or stay at home. Then naturally he was in favor of improved highways. They saved gas and upkeep. They increased the speed, safety and comfort of travel.

He had bought his car, and he now bought his roads, on the installment plan. The towns issued bonds to mature at varying periods. The taxes are now a heavy burden, and of every dollar of tax about 50½ cents are for roads and repairs.

Many of the farmers are in distress. In a certain family of seven the children take turns in fasting one day a week. The reason is that for many years they have been getting a low price for their milk.

On one of the hills I met a merryhearted old-time schoolmaster who really said things. "You know," he began, "this was never a place to make money, but it was always a good place to make men. Some of the men we've turned out have put the world in our debt. In the old time boys and girls were actually acquainted with their parents and the parents were worth knowing. A sublime devotion grew up between them. In our homes there was time to read and think.

"Now, I have had charge of a number of man factories up here—high schools and academies. You know, there's a time when every boy and girl is a fool. They've got to be watched and convinced of the fact. As a rule they had begun to suspect the truth before they got to

me. Here's the fundamental thing to remember in man making: At one time or another the Mind and the Body of boy and girl get into a row and one or the other is licked. It's at that point in the road where you meet Sex and its allied deviltries.

"The Mind may win all its battles. There's danger even in that, for the children may easily begin to think that they know more than God. You must turn them right while they're in the gristle. Only a miracle can make one change his mental direction after his bones and muscles have begun to set. I remember the time when I was a damn fool and didn't know it until my father told me. It took a number of private interviews to convince me.

"When a fellow gets the penetration to discover that alarming fact about himself he's on the road to better things. So many spend their lives feeding and building up and rubbing the spavins of a jackass whose ears can be seen a mile away. Oh, it's a dangerous strip of road ahead after one gets into his teens!

"Now, when the fight between mind and body is on in our children, the body gets an undue amount of help. Every week they go to the theater where they have a chance to see and study the life of the world of which they know nothing—the motives that keep the wheels going. What do they see? Well, it's largely revolting sex stuff, seduction, murder, robbery, strutting bullies, gun-play, biffs on the chin, wild, impossible adventures in which the hero performs a miracle by leaping over some kind of precipice. Is this life? Well, if so, it's unbelievable. A wise man must conclude that if our life has come to that, America is an amusing country. Of course, it isn't true.

"It is the duty of every town and city to see that the young are correctly and well educated. This means that it is as much their duty to superintend the theaters as the

schools. It wouldn't tolerate a school whose purpose was simply to amuse and mislead the young. Yet no school has one-fiftieth part of the influence of the new theater which has pushed its way into every countryside of America."

We drove one day to the edge of the wilderness to see an old and exemplary citizen, who lived with his daughter and son-in-law. He had been a churchman and a Bible student. I was looking for a sacred atmosphere. While the deaf old gentleman was telling me of the best sermon that he had ever heard, a number of young children played in the dooryard. Among them was an attractive little girl of six, eating bread and butter. A chicken came near her bare feet for the crumbs.

"Get away!" she said with some indignation. "If you peck my feet I'll kick your g—— d—— head off."

"It's fortunate for a grandfather to be deaf these days," I said to my wife.

Such are the new problems of my own land—and of all sections like it, I assume.

Its women no longer bake bread. Their motorcar enables them to patronize the bakeries and even the laundries. They have more leisure, and no one will regret it who knows of the hard life they had in the old time.

There are few distinguished men in the towns, whereas in the old time there were many. But there are still thrifty folk in town and countryside. It is worthy of note that Canton, a village of 3,000 persons, has bank deposits of \$5,000,000. This in spite of the hard times. While the farmer may be sorely pressed, he has milk, grain, vegetables, meat on the hoof, and comfortable shelter. He doesn't have to go begging. There is no bluff, no "keeping up with Lizzie" in his life. While his person, his family, and his farm may look shabby, often he will have a little money drawing interest.

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### 3. FINDING CHARACTER

As a small boy my curiosity about the world I lived in made me a nuisance. The vote was almost unanimous in the family. This curiosity continued through my youth. My legs became its servants and I fear that there were days when my father and mother regretted that I ever was born. This must be said for my restless passion to get acquainted with the world: it put me in touch with two remarkable characters, the memory of whom has helped me to weave this web of life behind me. I had gone to Vermont on an errand. Tempted by beautiful things, I spent so much that I had not money enough to buy my ticket to take me home on the railroad. That did not worry me. I was sixteen years of age. Those were the sunny, songful days of midsummer and there were pleasant roads ahead.

On one of them I overtook a boy some two or three years older than myself. He had a wooden leg—a rude stump on which his knee rested—and walked with a grip in his hand. He was a rugged, serious-looking boy, with a face browned by the sunlight. He asked for my name and “place of residence.”

“I’m a commercial traveler,” he informed me presently.

“What do you sell?”

“Sit down an’ I’ll show ye.”

We sat on the grass together, and he opened his grip. It was full of round white balls, differing in size and neatly wrapped in tinted tissue paper.

"What is it?" I asked.

"What is it?" he answered, with dignity. "That, sir, is Sal."

"Sal?" said I.

"Sal," said he, with a fond look at one of the white balls which now lay in his hand. "Sal cleans and polishes silverware, glassware, gold, brass, and pewter; removes dirt from woodwork, and makes the home bright and beautiful."

How glibly the words flowed from his tongue!

"What is your line?" he asked.

"I'm on my way home," said I.

"How would you like to take Sal with you?" he asked.

"I don't know," was my answer.

"I'll sell you the receipt for a dollar," said the boy with a wooden leg. "Fifty cents' worth of material will make a hundred balls. They sell like hot cakes—ten cents for the small sizes, twenty-five for the large."

"I haven't much money—only sixteen cents," I answered, embarrassed.

He looked me over from head to foot, and said, "I'll trust ye, if ye'd like to try it."

"All right," I said.

He opened his little grip and counted out ten of the small balls and as many large ones.

"There," said he, "ye ought to be able to sell 'em all in a day. Then you can send me a dollar for the receipt."

"How do you go to work to sell it?" I asked.

"The towns are best," said he. "When I get to a town I make a little map of the main streets and put down the names—the hotel man is always glad to help you. By an' by I begin to ring the doorbells. I don't ask for the lady of the house—no, sir; I say, 'Is Mrs. Smith at home?' It

works grand—there she is. 'Kind lady,' says I, 'I'm introducin' Sal, who cleans silverware, glassware, etc. Sal is better than a hired girl.'

"Don't forget to say that it makes the home bright and beautiful. It's a nice chunk o' language an' tells just what the women are trying to do. 'Course she says, 'No, thanks.' Then says I, 'If you've any old piece o' tarnished silver, I'd like to make a little exhibition. As the poet says:

'I'll make it shine  
As brightly as those eyes of thine.'

Throw in a little portry once in a while. It sounds good an' is easy to remember. But ye got to be careful. Some don't like it. Women that wear aprons an' have their sleeves rolled up'll generally stand portry, specially if they've got curly hair. Look out for handsome women that wear diamonds an' set around with their feet up readin' portry. Seems so them that read portry get enough of it. Don't ever give 'em any of yours.

"Women are funny. Around here there's two kinds of 'em—insiders an' outsiders. The outsiders talk about their neighbors; the insiders talk about their livers an' lungs, an' so on. I know one that talks about her liver shameful. You'd think it was the meanest thing in the world.

"They ain't all alike. In some places you'll find 'em perched in their fam'ly trees. Lord! I know one that sets an' chirps by the hour in her fam'ly tree. You've got to let her go it, an' bym-by, maybe, you can bring her down to the fam'ly teapot. If so, you're all right. It's wonderful how they go on. You'll enjoy it, an' that's half the battle.

"Be sure to notice the children. I always let 'em fool with my wooden leg. Sometimes I put one end on

a chair an' let 'em set on it. I suppose this old leg has been set on an' abused more than any leg in the world.

"You ain't got a wooden leg, an' it's kind of a pity, as ye might say, for it's wonderful how this thing helps in business. Lots o' times it helps ye git acquainted, an' that gives ye a chance. Then say, look a-there." He flung his wooden stump over his knee and felt the surface of it, and explained: "That's where one kid drove a nail in it, an' that's where one fetched a whack with a stove iron, an' there a little redheaded boy bored a hole with his gimlet. Curious how they take to it; an' I don't mind much. Helps business an' makes 'em happy."

He called my attention to many small dents in the wood.

"That's where the dogs has bit it," he went on. "If a dog comes at me, I always put it out to him. It keeps 'em busy."

He showed me a small atomizer, adding, "A little ammonia'll shift the trouble onto them."

We rose and resumed our journey. I had stored my small stock of Sal in my coat pockets.

"There's the receipt," he said gravely as he handed me a piece of paper.

It revealed the fact that Sal was composed chiefly of whiting and ammonia.

"All ye need now is a small sponge an' some tissue paper, an' here's a piece o' chamois that ye can have an' welcome."

He explained his method of applying Sal, and presently handed me his card, on which was this legend:

JAMES HENRY McCARTHY  
COMMERCIAL TRAVELER  
HERMON CENTRE, N. Y.

"I ain't much there," he went on. "The boys call me Pegleg at home, an' that's one reason I got out. I wish you'd call me Mr. McCarthy, please. I intend to be a gentleman, an' try to be. Can you tell me what a gentleman is?"

I looked thoughtful and said nothing. Mr. McCarthy continued:

"He's a man that don't git drunk or swear or pare his nails in public, an' always takes off his hat to a lady. He washes his hands before he goes to the table, an' eats kind o' slow an' deliberate, an' maybe smokes a fine cigar after dinner, an' always does as he'd like to be done by. That's why I'm tryin' to help you along."

I expressed my gratitude in no halfhearted way.

"I like you, dinged if I don't," said Mr. McCarthy, with a kindly patronage. "You'll git along all right—don't worry."

After a moment of silence:

"Ye see, I'm careful about all these things. I keep my eyes an' ears open, an' I'm teachin' myself. I hope I'm a gentleman. But I ain't finished myself yet. You wait; I'll show ye somethin' one o' these days. How do you happen to be on the road?"

I told him my story.

"Don't worry," he went on. "Mr. James Henry McCarthy will see you through. I try to be benevolent."

We walked on a little way in silence.

"I suppose you've noticed that I can sling some rather big words," he remarked presently. "Well, I always carry a pocket dictionary, an' when I hear a word I like I look it up an' chalk it down in my notebook; helps my conversation. I study it a good deal while I'm traveling. Ye see, I never had a chance to go to school much—just learnt how to read an' write an' cipher a little. My knowl-



edge ain't very superior. Now, that's quite a word—superior. How does it sound?"

"All right," I answered.

"Never used it before—found it in the book today. I've got about forty dollars saved, an' I've learnt thirty new words so't I can use 'em. When I go home by an' by they've got to look up to me."

The oddness of it all was not lost upon me, young as I was. I think often of the frankness of that young son of America, just beginning to feel his way upward from the plane of lowly poverty and of his kindly heart.

It was haying time and a kindly farmer offered me a job that would give me the money I needed. I went to work in the fields. At night I slept with the hired man—a big, ignorant, good-natured fellow, who bore the sonorous name of Sam. Often he indulged in autobiography that led into highly romantic scenes. He had "took a shine" to a certain girl.

One evening after a vivid description of her person he said: "I wished you'd write a letter for me which I could copy and send to her. I want it worded right up to the mark. You've got learnin', an' will know how to write a good, respectable, high-toned letter."

I agreed to do my best for him.

Mr. Baker called us at four, and we dressed and went into the garden and dug potatoes until breakfasttime. So each day began, its work continuing in field, mow, and milking yard until dark.

Next evening, when we went to our room, with pen and ink I sat down to write the letter for him.

"To Miss Fannie Comstock, Malone, New York," he dictated, in a whisper. "Dear Miss."

He sat a moment thinking.

"Tell her I ain't forgot her," he went on, "an' that

I am well an' hope you're the same, an' so on an' so forth."

So I began the letter as follows:

DEAR MISS,—It is only a month since we parted, but it has been a year long, and although I am far away it will surprise you to learn that I see you often. I see you in the fields every day and in my dreams every night.

"I don't think that'll do," he demurred soberly, when I read it to him.

"Why not?" was my query.

"Well, it ain't facts. I ain't seen her on any part o' this farm an' the month ain't had no more'n thirty-one days in it—that's sure."

I tried again with better understanding, and this came of it.

DEAR MISS,—I write these lines to let you know that I am well and that I haven't forgotten you. I hope that you are well and that you haven't forgotten me. I am working on a farm, and am as happy as could be expected.

"That's good," said he, when I read it to him; and he added proudly, with his finger on the unfinished line, "Wages, thirty dollars a month."

I did as he wished.

"Now go on," he suggested. "Throw in a big word once in a while."

"Aren't you going to say anything about love?" I asked. "A little poem might please her."

"Go light on that," he answered doubtfully. "She's respectable."

It is a trait of the common clay of which Sam was made to consider love a thing to be reluctantly, if ever, confessed. When the grand passion showed itself in his conduct it was greeted with jeers and rude laughter. It became, therefore, a hidden, timid thing.

"Nonsense!" I exclaimed. "She can't be more respectable than love and poetry. If you love her you ought not to be ashamed of it."

"Well, throw in a little if you think best," he yielded, "but do it careful."

So the letter continued:

Lately I've been saving my money. Perhaps you can guess why. I want a home and someone to help me make it happy, and I believe I've found her. She is good and beautiful, and all that a woman should be. Do you want to know who it is? Well, that's a secret. She's a lady, and that's all I will tell you now. Fannie, you're a friend of mine, and I need your advice. I am a little frightened and don't know just what to say to her, and you could make it easy for me if you would. Please let me know when I can see you.

Sam shook his head and laughed and exclaimed, "That's business!"

"No, it's love," I objected.

"Well, it ain't foolish or unproper, an' it sounds kind o' comical. She'll want to know all about it. Put in that I'm goin' to take a farm an' be my own boss, an' have as good a horse an' buggy as anyone. That makes it kind o' temptin'."

I did as he wished.

"Now say, 'Yours truly, with respect,'" said he, and so my task was ended.

I had begun to know the world I lived in when I got back to my home. I think that I knew better than most people the spirit of the country boys of America.

I recall vividly a bicycle journey to West Salisbury, Vermont, where I spent a part of my youth. I had entered a deep valley. On one side of the narrow dirt road was a steep sidehill where grain was growing. I wondered how

they could cultivate a slant so difficult. Just ahead of me a man with a scythe on his arm was walking hurriedly along the roadside. I dismounted near him and trailed my wheel, walking as fast as I could to keep up with him. To my surprise he did not even look at me but held his pace. He was a rough-barked, old, human oak with a curious, faded-brown, cocked hat on his head. An iron-gray mustache emerged from the stubble on his face. To open conversation I remarked:

"It's a fine day."

Quickly and without turning to look at me he answered:

"Best in the history o' the world."

Evidently this man wished me to understand that he had no time to waste with idlers on the road. I was a trifle embarrassed by his indifference. I had to say something. So I said:

"How did you get your grain into that sidehill?"

"Shot it in with a musket."

The answer came like a flash of gunpowder. It was startling. He had not looked at me. Again it was up to me. What would I say now? In my embarrassment I asked the foolish question:

"Is that a fact?"

"No, it's conversation."

Again his answer came back like the snapping of stretched rubber. He was still hurrying along with that scythe on his arm as if bothered by my curiosity.

I said to myself: "It's time I got down to business." So I asked:

"Is there anything of interest in this part of the country?"

For the first time he stopped and turned and looked

at me and asked: "Did ye notice that I look kind o' sickly?"

"No," I answered.

"Look ag'in."

I looked into gray eyes that twinkled with amusement.

"You stop at the first house on the right," he went on. "A man lives there who began talkin' when he was two year old an' he ain't got through yit. Comes over an' calls me out o' bed nights to tell me suthin that he'd forgot to tell before. He's got a mortgage on my farm an' I have to listen to him. That's the reason I'm sickly an' kind o' man-shy. He's wore me out. His memory is a reg'lar swamp. His wife has to pull him out an' clean him off every day. If ye step into his mind ye git mired. He ain't an ass. He's a morass."

This type of man had been familiar to me since my boyhood but I had never seen an example of the droll Yankee quite so perfect. More than any man I have known he stimulated my interest in human nature.

Those Yankees among whom I spent my youth had a keen sense of humor. There in northern New York was an unspoiled bit of transplanted New England. The flavor of the old times still lingered in the life of these purebred, simple folk. The ancient, democratic spirit, the rugged, stern, uncompromising virtues of the elder race were there. The cheaper types of the ancient breed were also in my homeland—the closed and narrow intellect, the braggart, the horse trader, the pettifogger, and the cheat. I began to think of it as an unworked and promising mine of material.

A winter day was nearing its end. I was hurrying across Union Square when near its north side a man with

a full gray beard accosted me. He was plainly but decently dressed. He spoke politely and with a faint Irish accent.

"I am hungry, sir."

"So am I" was my answer as I surveyed the man who was quite sixty years of age. "Come with me and we'll have a good dinner together."

He followed me to the Poplars, a well-known and admirable restaurant opposite the old Continental Hotel on the south side of Twentieth Street. We entered the basement room where was the long and busy bar and only a few tables. We had one to ourselves in a remote corner beyond the bar. Turning to my strange guest, I inquired: "What is your name?"

"John Joseph Smith, sir," he answered.

"Well, Mr. Smith, let's forget our troubles and have a cheerful time. Shall we begin with cocktails and oysters on the shell?"

"Not for me, sir. All I want is a piece o' roast beef, some potatoes, an' a cup o' coffee."

As we ate he told me a bit of his history. He had been a conductor on the Third Avenue line. Through an accident he had lost his job. On account of his age he had found it impossible to get work. He was one of the many improvident men whom the business of the world has shaken off its back and was now depending on the world's charity.

"Where do you live?" I asked.

"At 300 Bowery, sir. I can get a bed there for fifteen cents a night."

"What's the matter with Mills Hotel?"

"It costs more an' there's too damn many majors an' colonels there. They talk ye dead. Besides, ye have to get up at the tap o' the bell."

"What's the matter with getting up at the tap o' the bell?"

"I like to dillydally in bed. Besides, if ye're in bed ye don't git hungry."

"What do you mean by dillydallying in bed? Do you lie and think?"

"Yes, sir, an' I'll be buildin' air castles."

"What kind of air castles do you build?"

"Oh, I'll be thinkin' o' the time when I'll have glad rags an' a shiny top hat on me head an' a gold-headed cane in me hand an' a roll o' bills in me pocket big enough to choke an elephant an' I'll be walkin' up Broadway an' maybe meet some o' the guys I know."

He slashed into his roast beef rather savagely.

"Well, suppose you did—what would happen?" I asked.

"I'd be tellin' 'em to go to hell."

How delightfully human was this sweet dream of his! How full of history!

He told me of his associates in that beggars' hotel at 300 Bowery. He had a patrician contempt for them. He was the aristocrat of the place. Thieves were there. He gave me an idea of their methods. He said that in their thieving they went upstairs backwards so they could shift their direction quickly if taken by surprise.

This remark of his I have not forgotten: "Most o' them lazy beggars set around be the fire all day readin' the papers an' when night comes they git shoved out on the street to study astronomy."

Here was a character who delighted me. He became an inmate of my little private museum but I never saw him again. He reminded me of my desire to write. Everywhere I was meeting men whose originality flung out a challenge.

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#### 4. THE RUNGS IN MY LADDER

I HAVE been asked to look back upon my failures and try to explain how I succeeded in achieving them, on the chance that some may find help and courage in what I shall write. It is a chance worth taking, although in taking it I am likely to achieve another failure. When I was about forty I learned better than to be afraid of failures. Indeed, lately I have grown rather proud of my list of them! What an amount of worry and pain they caused me when they were happening! Now, as I look back, how the scene is changed! The people on the stage have grown so kindly and benevolent—even the worst of them. Then, too, the failures to which they contributed have been so worth while. The whole structure of my life, poor as it is, seems to rest upon them pretty evenly and firmly.

I pity the man who has no failures to his credit, whose way has been smooth and prosperous from beginning to end, because such a man may even be riding to the only tragic failure there is—that of life itself.

The thing that most often tends to poverty is the thing we call "success." If one's failures have been honestly achieved by hard and long-continued effort, they become highly useful and convincing.

After leaving college I became a reporter in New York. My own view is that I achieved a failure in that job, although I did some good work. One needed what was called "nerve" for the best success in reporting, and I was a green country boy. I hated to push myself into situations where I was not quite welcome.



I got my foothold through a happy accident. I was asked to make a tour of the hotels and write a column about them and the people they fed and sheltered. The newspapers were often telling of country folk who came to town and blew out the gas. I started my little screed with these lines of doggerel:

The countryman comes from his rural retreat,  
Worn out with excitement he stands on the street  
And waits for the endless procession to pass,  
Then goes to his tavern and blows out the gas.  
"I can't live in this hell," he wrote in a letter,  
"So I'm makin' a change an' I guess for the better."

I had done a fairly good job of reporting but this bit of fool verse put me aboard ship and on my way. It got a laugh from the captain, at which I wonder. But the laugh was a help to me. After all, people do love to laugh.

Soon after this I had a hard struggle in about the most difficult kind of business that any man ever attempted. I was a pioneer in the newspaper syndicate business. I remember hearing my friend Andrew Carnegie say: "Beware of pioneering. The pioneer generally fails and others will reap where he sowed."

I had written a sketch of Henry Irving just before he began his first American tour. It pleased the great actor, and on his arrival in New York he invited me to come and meet him at his hotel. There I met also Joseph Hatton, an English novelist who had come over to write Mr. Irving's impressions of America. It was he who inspired me to try my talents in this new field. I started with one of his novels, and made five hundred dollars out of it. I have never enjoyed such a sense of opulence as that money gave me—never. Mr. Hatton then proposed

a series of interview sketches with England's great men: Gladstone, Ruskin, Swinburne, Tennyson, William Black, and others. These were to be the attractive features in a series of fifty-two letters from London to be published simultaneously in cities far apart.

Then came the first of many journeys up and down the continent. I slept on Pullman cars; I climbed innumerable flights of stairs, often late at night, to ratty editorial rooms in all the big cities. After twelve years of it I estimated that I had traveled seven hundred miles up stairs and down in quest of managing editors. There was a steep grade in the way of the syndicate man those days.

Well, this first trip succeeded handsomely. I made contracts which insured me an income of forty dollars a week for a year. This enabled me to give up my place on the Brooklyn *Daily Times* and devote all my energy to the development of syndicate journalism. I had little to give it save energy and imagination. I remember that my friend, Governor Flower, who came from the north country, listened to my plan and said:

"It's a good idea and I'm going to give you two hundred and fifty dollars to help you along."

It tided me over a difficult situation. It is the only financial help I had from anyone in those hard days of my pioneering. It was a tough game. I was favored by the friendly counsel of editors and publishers and by the kindly consideration of writers. Slowly the little business grew, until my name was on the pay rolls of all but three of the leading newspapers, and most of the authors of international fame were contributing to its service.

One thing I did that was really worth while those days: I doubled the pay of the author for serial rights. It happened when I first secured Conan Doyle as a contributor. He was then getting about \$68 a thousand words. I

offered him \$130, and he came with me. The effect was the doubling of rates all along the first rank of authorship, and those prices have since increased, not diminished.

Now and then there came a day of great elation in these years of toil. One was that day when a bundle of manuscript by various authors came back from a magazine, but not the little tale I had written.

I had a brother, Wilber, who was an abler businessman than I, and he was a great help to me. I was prospering. I had a comfortable cash balance. The hard times of 1893 did not bother me.

A beautiful side issue, with a blue ribbon on its neck, was led into my office one day by a man of proved ability. The side issue was a weekly advertising journal. After careful consideration of his plan I agreed to back him. For a year he did well. Then he and his friends got a new idea. It seemed to be that of consuming all the whisky in Park Row and its vicinity. Soon I had that weekly advertising journal on my hands. It was one of the hungriest dogs I have known.

In the end I had to sell my business. I sold for just enough to pay all its debts. I had scored a failure, but not in the courts. It worried me because I had a wife to care for. Still, as a revelation of the courage of that woman, it was worth all it cost.

We had friends—many good friends. One of them said to me: "Times are improving. I'll back you for a little speculation and take all the risk myself."

At any other time in my life I would have said no to a friend making me so generous a proposition. But I was in need of money and, moreover, the plan looked good.

We tried it in a thousand-share lot of stocks approved by conservative judgment. Suddenly one day the

thunderbolt of the Boer War fell on the market and prices crumbled. Later my friend had a tip that Third Avenue was going down and that it could be sold for a large profit. He ordered the broker to sell 500 shares short. Within three days when all the "suckers"—as they call them in Wall Street—had taken the bait, Third Avenue began a violent rise. That was Wall Street's polite way of picking pockets.

We got back a part of our money by covering and then we gave up. The worst of it all was this: my friend lost a considerable sum and the thought of it gives me a pang in spite of the fact that he was a rich man.

That painful failure is one of the most valuable in my collection.

Another friend owned a magazine. He wanted me to go with him as an editor. He was a good fellow but I knew that he was difficult. For some reason his editorial staff had been flowing in and out like sand in an hourglass. The shifting was one of the jokes of the literary crowd in New York.

I went to him with a contract for two years. I stayed about two months. This time I failed because I could not put up with brutality, and again I was worried. I had some debts and only a few hundred dollars in the bank. But like all the others, this failure was heading me toward the thing I really wanted to do. For a year I had had an idea in mind. Beloved memories of my old home were stirring in me. I had written some stuff and went to spend a night with my friend Walter H. Page in Cambridge. He had read my script. He was then editing the *Atlantic*.

"It's good," he said. "Some of it got under my vest. But you need a plan to hold it together."

Again I had failed and rather fortunately. That dear-

est of men had told me the truth. I was depressed but on the way to better things.

Suddenly my plan arrived. I went to work on it as soon as I left that magazine. I began writing in our little flat in Tarrytown. My wife was delighted with my copy. The work was interrupted by a call to the editorial staff of the *World*. I spent a year and a half in that office. Then I got a leave of absence to finish the book. Before it was finished I had made a contract for another book. So my newspaper career came to its end.

My book was published on July eleventh. Before Christmas my royalties had reached a figure amazing to my wife and me. Our problems were solved. Hundreds of letters came from people I was never to see, expressing approval and even a warm affection for me and the book. It reminded me of the line from Whitman:

Do you know what it is as you pass to be loved by strangers?

Still I did not take that too seriously, knowing as I did that popularity may pass as quickly as it comes. Yet, I must say, those letters were the part of our reward that gave us great satisfaction, and was it not all the product of many failures?

Some years later a letter came from the late Bert Boyden, then the editor of a highly popular magazine. He said that he was enclosing an article from a man who had been my secretary and he requested that I write for his magazine an essay on "The Rungs in My Ladder."

My former secretary had indulged in some undeserved adulation of my character as a man in a prize competition.

I wrote of the rungs in my ladder and I now felt qualified to present kindness as one of them. In all my re-

lations I have tried to think of the other fellow. Nearly all the rungs were represented by the word "failure."

The rung of kindness had put me into delightful relations with that magazine, which continued for many years.

Now and then I have seen distress and poverty ending in grim tragedy of disappointment among those who had come to New York with cheerful optimism to bet on their literary talents. It was a desperate gamble at which not many could hope to succeed. A man may toil night and day until his last cent is gone and his heart is under his arm when he goes to the publisher. He is behind in his room rent, he has lived for weeks on cheap porridge or the hospitality of friends. His clothing is shabby. He is perhaps hungry when he calls for his answer. It is heartbreaking to learn that the kindly editor has no use for the script into which his heart's blood has flown. At that moment he would trade his manuscript for a pound of beefsteak, yet he can't.

He may have in his hands a piece of property that will sometime be worth a large sum of money—as did Edward Westcott and Stephen Crane, who tramped vainly from one publisher to another with dreams, richly carved in ivory so that the world has loved them, yet for a time they were not worth the price of a good dinner. I have seen much of that and I advise the young who seek my counsel to take no desperate gamble with their talents. It may be a long wait and there should be little question as to the matter of food and lodging while it lasts.

One must have material—thorough and accurate knowledge of some kind of life. The young are likely to forget this. It is easy to write if one knows his theme so well that he feels the urge of it. Then the work is largely that of organization. Experience is assuredly the great

teacher. Yet the constructive imagination can profit much by the experience of others. Crane did that, yet he knew his subject better even than did the reporters of bloody battles whose work he had studied. Between their lines he had found the psychology of battles.

As a gateway to experience the newspaper may be of real service to the keen observer. I have thought much of the thrilling epic which my friend John A. Cockerill, the most brilliant managing editor of his time, was fond of telling. He came from a wilder West than we know. He was a rough-tongued man. I present a version that is in some degree expurgated. The bursting expletives of the colonel may be imagined. The story ran about as follows:

When I was city editor of the Cincinnati *Enquirer* I was working at my desk one day when I became aware that someone was standing by my side. I looked up at a slim, shabby, sallow youth whose dark eyes were covered by spectacles.

"What can I do for you?" I asked.

"I hope that you can give me a job, sir," he answered in a lifeless, melancholy tone.

A little annoyed I shot these words at him—the usual answer: "Hell, no! I have more people now than I can use."

I have never forgotten the pathetic look of the boy as he turned away and walked toward the door. He walked like a man going to the gallows.

"See here, young man," I called, "go and sit down in the corner there. I may get a chance to try you out before the day ends."

He sat in the corner and I forgot he was there. In about an hour hell had broke loose in the pork city. Some wooden buildings had got afire and floods of flame, leap-

ing sidewise in the wind, were tearing the guts out of the town. Alarm after alarm was coming in. Then came a lively ten minutes. I sent out every available man of the city staff and every editor in the office to get the news. When the last of them had hot-footed down stairs bound for the battle front I returned to my desk. There in the corner sat the sallow, dejected, spectacled, shabby, young farmer from God-knew-where. I laughed and called out:

"Say, young man, the town is burning up. Go out and see if you can get a story to write."

"Very well, sir!" he answered and away he went.

Again I forgot all about him. Midnight arrived after a hectic day. The history of one of the worst days in the history of the town had been written. Many of the forms were made up. I was at my desk when in strolled that shabby guy with the spectacles. He'd been gone long enough to be dead, buried, and forgotten. Once more I laughed and said:

"So you're back again. Did you get a good story?"

"I think I did, sir."

"Sit down and write it quick," I shouted. "We'll be going to press soon."

I watched him as he sat down at a desk and began to write, his eyes down close to his pencil. That poor yokel, who looked as if he had been sleeping a week in a hay-mow, amused me.

In about ten minutes I went over and picked up the sheets he had written, expecting to chuck them into the wastebasket and tell him to quit. I read the sheets in my hand. My boy! I got that little vibration that goes up your spine and stirs the roots of your hair. Gosh t'almighty! No such copy had ever come to my hand. It was the work of a master. Here was a power as great as that of the devouring flames. I can never forget how vividly



he reproduced the stir and tumult and terror of the crowds, the psychology of a man poised in a high window and finally leaping for his life. I looked at the clock.

"How much can you write of this?" I asked.

"As much as you like, sir," he answered without looking up.

"Keep at it," I said and gathering what he had written I ran up the stairway two steps at a time to the chief's room. I put the sheets on his desk and said: "Read that."

He read them to the last word and asked:

"Who is writing this?"

"A poor devil who drifted in here today."

"Tell him to keep at it until one-fifteen. Kill enough stuff on the first page to make room for his story."

I did. It was a famous story. It is one of the glowing peaks in my memory. It was the first rung in the long ladder of Lafcadio Hearn.

In this business you never know when you're going to meet up with an angel. They may even wear spectacles and look like a tramp printer after a spree.

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## 5. GREAT MEN OF MY TIME

*Actor—Artist—Author—Statesman*

WE who were coming to manhood and womanhood in the early eighties have one great obligation to acknowledge. The stage had arrived at a summit of power and influence for which, I think, there is no parallel in its long history. The great passions of man, the dignity and power of the human spirit were illumined with the flashing light of inspired genius. One who lived in that time had good reason to thank God for his eyes and ears. No power that I have felt since I came to years of understanding can for a moment be compared with that golden age of interpretation. Every man will bow his head who felt the godlike gifts of Salvini, Booth, Irving, Barrett, Bernhardt, Coquelin, Jefferson, Modjeska, Ristori, Janauchek. And why? Well, each of these great men and women would have given him undying memories.

To see Booth in *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, or *The Fool's Revenge*; Salvini as Conrad or Othello; Irving as Shylock or in *The Bells*; Jefferson in *Rip Van Winkle* or *The Rivals*, was to know that something had happened to you. For a long time you were thinking and speaking of it and some part of this something would go along up the road with you. In clubs and hotels and at dinner tables the theater furnished the main topic of conversation.

There were lesser and really moving interpreters like McCullough, O'Neil, Florence, Clara Morris, Edwin Thorne, and F. F. Mackaye, as well as the several admi-

rable companies of Daly, Wallack, Palmer and Frohman.

The greatest man of these distinguished interpreters of the drama was undoubtedly Tommaso Salvini.

We used to read of supermen. Some of them have been thoroughly unsupered. No one can be safely supered until he has been dead at least fifty years. Still, Salvini was a towering man and no other could have done the things he did.

How true were the words of Emma Lazarus—a distinguished poet of that time—who thus presents the big items in his personality:

An incomparably majestic bearing with perfect grace of movement—a frame of massive and harmonious proportions filled with the genius of tragedy; a voice of great depth and volume, capable of exquisite modulation. It haunts one like noble music.

I lived through a time when the stage had become the most powerful interpreter and exponent of the spirit of man. It must be admitted, I think, that never in its history had it achieved an influence so irresistibly commanding and deserved. Human nature toiling slowly upward, through ages unknown and known, is a rather big and important institution. The stage has flung a revealing light upon its tragic adventures. Salvini, Booth, Barrett, Irving, Bernhardt, Modjeska, and McCullough gave their strength to no trivial stuff. They cast their plummets into great depths of tragic experience in Hamlet, Macbeth, Othello, Cassius, Richelieu, Louis XI, Mathias, Conrad, Fedora, Camille. There was none in the list whose work could be forgotten. It lived with one—a beloved memory that had its effect upon thought and character. One's heart and mind went with them to the heights and depths of human adventure, and came back wiser and stronger. The

great eras of the stage have been separated by thousands of years—the jump from Euripides to Shakespeare. When will the world see again a like climax in the art of the theater?

Salvini was the incomparable master of all the great players. Probably his equal had not been seen before. He alone could fill the gigantic molds of Shakespeare with that strength to spare which gave his effort an overwhelming power.

I saw his Othello thirteen times. It was immensely impressive to see the heroic, honest Moor take on the pantherlike stride and face as his mind began to lose its poise. I remember, as he sat by his desk writing with a long plumed pen, how Iago bent over him with a tongue like a burning flame. Othello twirled the pen between thumb and finger so that its plume lashed the air, like the tail of a great cat, and the writhing of his heart was in the look on his face. It was like some big cosmic disturbance. It filled the spectator with a shaking awe.

What remarkable scenes we often witnessed before the last curtain fell! After some tremendous climax, at the end of an act, men would leap over the footlights to embrace the master. His lines were in Italian, yet never for a moment was one in doubt of his meaning.

I spent the winter of 1913 in Italy. Salvini was then well over eighty years of age. When we arrived in Florence I wrote to the great master and said that I must see him, if possible, once more. He immediately sent a letter to me written by his own hand.

Agreeably with his invitation, I went to his villa next morning. I passed through a gate in the high latticed fence of a garden and was at once near the door of his modest home. Salvini met me there. His hair and mustache, black when I had last seen him, were now white as snow. Where

was the proud, erect, majestic figure so admirable as he said: "My very worthy and approved good masters"? What a change time had wrought in him! He was bent a little and suffering from sciatica.

We went into the house and sat down together. I told him of my careful study of his work as Othello. I reminded him of many bits of business, like that of the waving plume, which had illumined the character and filled it with a fascinating power.

He then told me that his friends had discouraged him when he first thought of going to America. They had said: "You do not speak English. The Americans will not understand you."

At last he decided to try it because America was the best market for the best art. He organized a company of English-speaking players. After many rehearsals he began his tour in Philadelphia. The theater was crowded. Soon it was filled with a kind of enthusiasm, the like of which America had never seen. People not in the audience were thrilled and amazed by newspaper accounts of what had happened. Next day long lines of people were slowly approaching the ticket office.

I can never forget the emotion in his face when he told of men leaping over the footlights to embrace him at the end of two of the acts. There were big tears in his eyes. I felt a touch of the old power in those wonderful eyes when he spoke of that day of triumph. What lightning flashes had flown out of them as some great, thunderous, organ note of anger issued from his lips!

Now he was cheerfully and gracefully playing the part of an old man condemned to the common fate. In his case one could not but feel the injustice of the decree.

The spirit of this man was a thing infinitely above the failing house of flesh in which it was then living. My

feeling was that his spirit had grown beyond the accommodation of the old house. The houses of this world fall into decay and their tenants have soon or late to leave them. This man was in need of a new and even nobler house than the old one. It was justly due him.

One of the great artists of my time came from my home town of Canton, although, during his boyhood, his family moved to Ogdensburg, on the St. Lawrence, some eighteen miles north of us. His name was Frederic Sackrider Remington. His mother's family, from whom he got his middle name, were from Canton, and what a jolly crowd they were!

Old Deacon Sackrider had a hardware store and there one heard many a good story and much hearty laughter. A deacon of the Presbyterian Church, when he went up into the wilderness every summer for a week of camping and fishing, he would playfully throw down his coat when he got to camp and say: "Deacon, you lie there till I'm ready to go back to town."

All the elder Remingtons whom I knew, were, except one, able but serious-minded business folk. That one exception was "Mart" Remington—a man of wit and imagination who was for a time editor of the *Albany Journal*, if I remember rightly. He was an uncle of Frederic. He wrote a humorous poem, about a certain event in Canton which lived only in the memory of the wags of the town. It was a lovely bit of good-natured satire.

As a boy Frederic Remington came often to visit his relatives in Canton. He was a rather short, fat boy, and always "terribly dressed up," we boys used to think, in spotless garments and a straw hat with two or three colors on its band. He was a lively boy who talked in a loud voice.

He went to Yale and then into the Far West, where the picturesque attitudes and movements of plainsman and horse captured his imagination, and he began to put his own vision of them on paper and canvas. He had become a famous artist while I was building up my newspaper syndicate in New York. We met one day on Park Row, went into a café, and sat down together for a long talk. He wanted to know about my work and plans. Bliss Carman had just accepted a ballad of mine which became extremely popular. I had a proof of it in my pocket.

When we parted I gave him the proof and said: "Take that along with you, old man. I'll give you a license not to read it. You'll find it will burn as well as any other piece of paper." He saw and felt the pictures that I had tried to present in my phrasing, and wrote me a most encouraging letter about them. Fred Remington was that kind of man. He liked to help some other fellow who was climbing the hill. He was soon to show the world that he was an artist in putting color into words. I shall never forget how vividly he could describe a scene in his talk or in his writing.

Within a year he illustrated a bit of my stuff for *Cosmopolitan*. I saw him often after that. At Cedar Island in the St. Lawrence, where he had a cottage for the summer, he showed me how a plainsman talks as he pours his whisky from a jug held on his shoulder.

Often he returned to Canton and his favorite loafing place was a shoe box in front of Joseph Ellsworth's shoe store much used by those who enjoyed conversation on a summer evening. There he loved to sit with the wits of the town and tell his stories of the Far West. Their laughter soon attracted a crowd of listeners.

After war was declared against Spain I went to the

big training camps as a correspondent for *Cosmopolitan*. I accompanied Generals Joe Wheeler and O. O. Howard from Chickamauga to the Tampa Bay Hotel where a great corps of correspondents were quartered. The immense camp was on a level plain some miles away.

Next day I went out to the camp to see it and my friend General Guy V. Henry, with whom I had been quartered at Chickamauga. The sun was setting as I tramped back toward the entrance. I passed a line of officers' horses hitched to posts. One of them had got his neck under the hitching strap and was in trouble. I went to his head to relieve him when I heard the shouted command: "Keep away from that horse."

The command was followed by a loud laugh near me. I turned and saw Fred Remington. That kind of greeting was characteristic. We had a delightful hour together in the evening. Soon I returned to New York and did not see him again for a year or more. He lived in New Rochelle and I at Riverside, Connecticut, and he was rarely in New York. Now and then we passed each other. There was time for only a hurried word and a wave of the hand. How characteristic of life in the metropolitan area!

Remington had a gentle and devoted wife. He spent the last year of his life in Ridgefield, Connecticut, where in midwinter he died after an operation. I went to his funeral up in the snowy hills. I returned with Augustus Thomas and E. W. Kemble. Thomas, long his neighbor, told me that Fred suffered from an ailment which made it necessary for him to stay quietly at home. For a year his wife had succeeded in keeping him there and his health improved. At last it became necessary for him to go to New York. His wife was not able to go with him. He promised to finish his business and return promptly. He was cold and he stopped at the Players Club to get



warm. Before its ample fireside old friends gathered around him. He had a joyful afternoon of laughter, storytelling, and good fellowship. Fred loved that kind of thing. He had a deep-seated humanity. His acute trouble returned with him to his home. The demand for a dreaded operation, full of peril for one with his thick abdominal wall, was now imperative, and the life of a beloved man and a great artist came to its end.

I was cruising in my little trading brig under the lofty ramparts of literature. With a cheery confidence I had seen Holmes and Whittier, who had no desire for the publicity I offered. I went to Hartford to see Mark Twain. He sat with his feet on a broad window sill looking out on a winter landscape as he smoked a pipe.

"No, I don't need anyone to reject my stuff for me," he drawled. "I do it myself. Feed it into the fireplace. It burns well, I can say that for it. There are days when I think that what I need is some fellow at ten dollars a week to write it for me."

I got acquainted with him later and one day he went to luncheon with me at the Sign of the Lanthorne. At the table he said: "Yes, I'll have some mince pie. When a thing don't agree with me I keep at it until one or the other of us gets the best of the argument."

The luncheon over, he sat down before the fire in a cushioned armchair, with his feet on a stool, and with an ever-plentiful supply of hot Scotch and rich Cuban cigars on a tray beside him, he showered upon us the riches in his memory. With the atmosphere and the accessories favorable and his feet exactly in the proper latitude, Mark Twain was at his best. Never with his feet on a platform or resting under a table. We had a season of storytelling

for the like of which I think one would need to go back to Rabelais and the *rire aux éclats* at his round table.

Was it the glad welcome and the flowing bowl that reminded him of going back on the old river, incognito, with a silk hat and fine top coat long after his career at the wheel had ended? The first story related to the thrilling lies of Rob Styles in the pilothouse, where he told of dredging the alligators out of the river and said, "There is nothing that an alligator hates like bein' dredged." What a perigee tide of humor! That story opened the door to other curious adventures. They were all in the book but there they lacked the color and the vivifying emphasis with which they now flowed from his lips, embellished by the fluent, sonorous, affectionate profanity of the old West. He had lately returned from his long trip around the world. With the exquisite art of the true comedian he told of his amusing adventures in that tour, and stayed with us until the shades of night were falling. At last he arose and drawled, as he brushed the cigar ashes from his garments, "I've been talkin' for hours an' I've enjoyed every damn word of it."

I remember a night when I sat next to Arthur Chandler at one of Colonel Harvey's dinners. It was a compliment to William Dean Howells on his birthday. Some thirty men were present and we sat at a big round table. Mark Twain was there and he did a characteristic thing. The coffee was coming in.

Chandler said to me: "Let's go out and get ready for a long sit while the speeches are being made."

We went out and found Mark Twain walking up and down in the anteroom with his hands in his pockets. Evidently he was thinking of his speech. We hurried along to avoid interrupting his cogitations. He called to us and we went to his side. He told us two bully stories spicy

enough to curl one's hair. Soon we were called to the table.

When Twain was introduced he rose and said: "All the evening I have been trying to think of something worthy of the subject. You other fellows wouldn't bother me a bit, but Howells is different. I went to the room across the hall to discover something in my mind that would be worth saying. I was making progress when along came Bacheller and Chandler and began to tell me obscene stories."

Everyone laughed and Chandler and I were more amused than any of the others.

He gave us then the only account that he ever gave, except privately to his intimates, of his one and only failure as an after dinner speaker.

In a delightfully satirical way he told of that birthday dinner to Whittier in Boston and his vain effort to amuse the great men of the city of culture who had gathered there. He did not give us an idea of the reason for his failure but I have heard, and I suppose it is true, that he had imagined a number of characters in a far western mining camp who were nicknamed for the gods of New England and locally known as Hank Longfellow, Ollie Holmes, Rafe Emerson, and Jack Whittier. The climax of the speech was said to be a red-hot quarrel in a saloon. It was a clever piece of wit. In almost any other time it would have captured its audience. But it was then sadly misplaced. Boston was the Olympus of human gods not to be trifled with. There they were on the dais. Who was this impudent, redheaded man from the West? His wit could not compete with their icy frowns. It fell like a cold rain, everyone shivering and uncomfortable.

He said in describing the scene:

"You can imagine the effect upon me of a speech,

ostensibly humorous, that could not break the ice with a single smile. When the party ended, under the silence what a hurricane of emotion! I crept out of the ruins and was glad to be able to stand up. I said to Howells: 'Well, old man, I've made a fool of myself,' and he agreed with me. Not verbally but facially. He was always polite. Nobody would look at me as I left the place. I was even snubbed by a third-rate poetess."

I have some letters from him. This one is too good to be lost:

DEAR IRVING BACHELLER,

The book has this moment arrived, just as I had finished my day's mail and profanity. I have written 38 letters today (as usual, not sure it isn't 48)—without help—and this one is the very first I find pleasure in writing. A thousand thanks; have longed for the book. My odious labors are done. I will curse out the remnant of blasphemy left in stock, then stretch out with a pipe and have a good time.

Yours ever,

MARK

Two careers in my time have been inspirational and much alike—how much alike only a few know. They are the careers of two men of the soil: Abraham Lincoln and Frank Billings Kellogg. They were alike in their early environment and toil, in their gift for putting great truths in a few simple words winged for travel, in their lofty vision of human service. They were the sons of cabineers. Both of them as boys studied law on time stolen from the hours needed for sleep. Kellogg will grow, as Lincoln grew, in the silence that has fallen upon him.

He was my friend, born within three miles of my birthplace in northern New York. We rode together to scenes familiar in his childhood at Crary Mills and beyond

toward Potsdam where stood the old Billings home. From there the Kelloggs went to live on Long Lake far in the deep wilderness. "Way up the Raquette" we would have said of that locality long ago. There the boy Frank, like young Abe Lincoln, had the unpolluted air of the wild country to breathe, and saw and felt the beauty of the primeval forest. There he would have seen the hunters and trappers of the old time and sportsmen coming in from the cities. No better place could have been found in which to lay the foundation of the rugged strength that was in Frank Kellogg. His father and mother were good people. There was no school in the wild country but they helped and encouraged the boy in his reading, writing, and ciphering. They probably represented the lumber interests of some large holders of forest land. They lived in a comfortable log cabin near the lake.

Frank was a little more than nine years old when his father and mother decided to give up their work there and go west. Many people in the north country were going west those days. My father had "the western fever" but he was anchored with a large farm and a big herd of cattle. The Kelloggs had only a wagon, a team of horses, and not much more cash than was needed for the journey. They set out for the open country on rough lumber roads. They arrived at Ogdensburg and ferried across the St. Lawrence to Prescott. Traveling by wagon was too slow for them. They sold the outfit and took a train on the Grand Trunk Railroad westward bound.

Minnesota was the broad destination in their minds. They had read much about it. St. Paul and Minneapolis were growing rapidly. It was a wonderful wheat country with the Mississippi and the great lake chain on either side and railroads for transportation. James J. Hill had begun his great work of development in the Northwest. He was

advertising its advantages and many were headed for that land of promise.

The Kelloggs got off at the thriving town of Rochester and began there to look for desirable land. They found it in the township of Viola in Olmsted County where they built a cabin and started their work. In that little home Frank began the hard, early and late, toil of the only son of a pioneer farmer: chores, milking, feeding, plowing, seeding, harrowing, weeding, harvesting, woodcutting—spring work, fall work and winter work.

There was a little one-room schoolhouse not far from the farm. In the winter season when the land was at rest under deep snow and there was little for the boy to do except chores, he went to this humble seat of learning. He learned easily and had a retentive memory. The Irishman who taught the school was an uplooking, scholarly man. He liked the studious, quiet, well-behaved boy from the East. They were soon on friendly terms. In his later life Frank Kellogg told me that the leading of this good man had done much for him. Memorizing and reciting the historical sketches of the Reverend Elijah Kellogg and long passages from the speeches of James Otis, Daniel Webster, and Patrick Henry did more to shape his ambition and improve his literary talent than any other part of his work in that little school. These things were in the reading books of that time.

The spirit, the rhythm, and the powerful phrasing of these masters got into his mind and lived there through the years in which his strength was growing. He recited well, and the teacher told him and his parents that he would make a great lawyer. Frank's ambition to be a lawyer was strengthened by a day in court at the county seat where he heard the pleading of distinguished men.

It is an interesting fact that all the boys of that and

an elder time had memories well stored with treasure from the great literature of the world. They could repeat poems by Scott, Burns, Tennyson, and Holmes, passages from Shakespeare, Milton, and Shelley. They lived with immortal words and their import became a spiritual force. It was, I think, true of Conkling, Evarts, Blaine, Rufus Choate, Charles O'Connor.

Greater than most of these shining lights of the bar was Frank B. Kellogg and in spite of an almost unbelievable fact in his history. This little one-room school was his academy, his college, his university. What better evidence of the value in American life of the tiny country schoolhouse and a memory trained to hold the phrasing of great ideals? When he got to his young manhood his muscles had been hardened by the ax, the scythe, the shovel, and the pitchfork.

The farm and the open air had given him rugged health but that was perhaps the smallest item in his possessions. He had achieved the patience that comes from heavy toil and that indefinable thing that comes of never breaking faith with his duty. Another great thing that a boy gets from beginning young to earn his living is common sense. It comes from observing, day after day, year after year, cause and effect in your own action. Both Lincoln and Kellogg got it that way.

After much observation I have come to think that patience is an indispensable quality of the great man. It was one of Lincoln's best spiritual assets, without which he could not have borne the abuse and misunderstanding of really important people and have held his course to the triumphant end in his vision. I am sure that he got it, as Kellogg did, from the toil in his early life. It is easier to get big things then than later.

There were two law firms in the town of Rochester.

One of them was an influential partnership of able men. The timid, swarthy, plainly clad, hard-handed farm boy first went to them. One can imagine the smile with which they looked upon the rustic youth and questioned him as to his schooling. He had nothing to commend him but good character and the knowledge of reading, writing, geography, and arithmetic gained in a district school. Moreover, he was poor. Student clerks worked a long time for nothing in every law office, and how could this boy live through his years of study and dress himself decently?

Frank told them that he would try to find a place where he could work for his board. To these able lawyers that was not an attractive proposition. They wanted for a clerk some smart, well-dressed young fellow who was a college graduate. So they politely but firmly declined, and Frank went to a firm of lawyers not so well known. Its leading member was a good, old-school lawyer of the name of H. A. Eckholdt. He liked the farm boy. Yes, he would take him into the office and give him instruction and law-books to read. Frank would have to do the office chores, which included sweeping, dusting, and going here and there on errands.

This important event came in midwinter. Frank found a farmer near town who would board him if he would do the farm chores. So his career in the law began in a corner of that office with Blackstone's *Commentaries* in his brawny hands. His brain was as brawny as his hands and soon Mr. Eckholdt was surprised by the boy's knowledge of the common law which, after all, was mostly common sense, and Frank was loaded with that.

In the spring he worked for a farmer through seed-time for \$13 a month. In the late summer and early autumn he worked in the harvest fields for \$15 a month. Then back again to his studies—Greenleaf on *Law of*



*Evidence*, Parsons on *Contracts*, and other classic authorities.

After about two years of this struggle to keep alive and presentable while he was learning the law the great day came when he was to be examined for admission to the bar. He appeared before Judge Mitchell, later a member of the Supreme Court, Judge Start, later chief justice of the Minnesota Court, and C. C. Wilson, the leading lawyer of Rochester.

Frank had been overworking. He was nervous. "Rattled" was the word he used in describing his condition. He floundered not a little in some of his answers. Yet the committee liked the young man. It went into conference. The kindly Judge Start said that the fellow knew more law than he was able to express in his answers. Wilson thought that he wouldn't do. Judge Mitchell announced: "I'm going to license him. That young fellow has something in him that convinces me."

The credentials were issued and Frank was a lawyer. He began his practice in his home county. He went to Pleasant Grove and tried his first case before a justice of the peace named Peek Pattridge. He won it and received the fee of \$3 in silver quarters. The farmer had agreed to take him home with his team but failed to do so and Frank had to walk twelve miles with the silver jingling in his pocket and singing of better times ahead. They came when he was made county attorney. In that position his talents attracted the attention of the eminent lawyers of the state. For years the Winona and St. Peter Railroad had owed a large sum to two towns in the county for bonds issued. The best lawyers had been unable to get the money. Frank Kellogg sued and with a powerful brief got a verdict for \$200,000.

He was now firmly on his feet. Country practice was

not for him. He opened an office in St. Paul where his distinguished talent was so admired by the leading lawyer of that growing city, Cushman K. Davis, that he offered Frank Kellogg a partnership. Not long after that Theodore Roosevelt selected him as the one lawyer in the land fit for an immense task which he conceived to be in the interest of the people of the United States. Frank was then undoubtedly the most distinguished lawyer on this continent.

Since then the career of this Minnesota farm boy is a part of the history of our country. The honors won or showered upon him would have been sufficient to distinguish at least half a dozen men. He became United States senator, Secretary of State, minister to the Court of St. James's, judge of the World Court, author of the Peace Treaty, winner of the Nobel Prize, and received a doctorate at Oxford University. I was in the room with him in Paris when he sat among the rulers of the world, himself their leader. It was a great thing that he and Briand had accomplished in bringing the nations into accord and against war as a remedy for human dissatisfaction. Surely the moral effect of it has been great and not for at least a century can that effect on the conscience of mankind be measured. Historically he is now, I think, the most eminent figure of his time.

I saw much of him after that in my house and elsewhere—a modest, kindly, unpretentious man.

I have said that his career is notably like Lincoln's. This is not merely a similarity of circumstance. When we survey their ideals of public service the likeness is even more apparent. They had a like gift of common sense and a like gift of expressing it. Here are a few samples of Kellogg's art of phrasing:

Individual extravagance is a folly; national extravagance is a crime.

It is the sacred duty of this republic to safeguard every American life and every American dollar.

There is no such thing as a one-sided neutrality.

There is no representative government unless the people are fairly and honestly represented.

Hold the Philippines until they can hold themselves.

Nourish but never nurse agriculture.

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## 6. THE FICKLE GODDESS

ARTHUR CHANDLER came often to my fireside. He was a Yale man in the class of "Bill" Taft, as he was wont to call him, and was on the staff of Harper and Brothers. His ideals were mostly in accord with my own. We were fond of each other. He was a man of unusual gifts. The sciences were changing the world and he kept pace, with understanding and a vision that saw far ahead. Edison was his warm friend.

In the firelight one evening he told this pretty tale of his first adventure in Wall Street:

A friend in the railroad business told me that Ontario and Western was going up. He proposed that we get aboard and take a ride to the City of Good Fortune. I had a few hundred dollars and could borrow a little more. Between us we raised a thousand dollars. I took it to my banker. I put our plan before him. The stock was then selling at 18. It had lately risen 8 points. He thought it an unfavorable time to buy. I insisted that I had good information. I was eager for the jump. The fickle dame was beckoning to me. The banker smiled. He was a man I had known in college.

"How much money do you want to risk on this gamble?" he asked.

"A thousand dollars," was my answer. "It's all I can raise."

"Well, I could buy a hundred shares for you and carry the stock as far as your money goes. If it breaks

below 8, you would be sold out. I advise you to let it alone."

He couldn't shoo me away. I clung to my purpose.

"All right," he said, "I'll buy a hundred shares on your account. You'll get some useful knowledge anyhow. There's room in every boy's head for a lot of that."

I gave him my money, signed an order in blank, and went away in a profuse perspiration. I was excited. My partner had said that the stock would go to 40. I began to consider what I would do with my profits. Three times that day I went to a ticker and watched the tape. The stock was going off. I saw 17 recorded, then  $16\frac{3}{4}$ ,  $16\frac{1}{2}$ , 16. It closed at  $15\frac{3}{4}$ . My enthusiasm began to ebb. Gosh! I could never hope to make money as fast as we were losing it. Next day all stocks were tumbling. Ontario and Western seemed to be leading the procession. It was busy devouring my substance. It never stopped to rest. It closed at  $13\frac{1}{4}$ . I was mad. I had been a fool. I deserved what I was getting. I thought of going to see the banker. I didn't. I couldn't bear to face him. I couldn't and wouldn't put up another dollar. I would just stand still and take my medicine. When the time came to do it they could sell me out and be damned.

In the next two days the stock rushed on in its downward course. It seemed to know just where it was bound for. It touched  $7\frac{3}{4}$ . Yes, that was going some. The stock halted to get its breath and faced about and began to run the other way. Having got rid of us, it was happy—as happy as a dog after an application of flea soap. I saw the ticker no more but every day I looked for O.W. in the newspapers. I saw the stock climb steadily to 28. What a lot of cutthroats they were in Wall Street. I didn't wonder that they could live in palaces. I felt a little like killing somebody. I was ripe for socialism or even anarchy.

I hadn't dared to confess my folly to my wife, who would have now to be content with a skimpy Christmas. I would have to get along without a new winter overcoat.

One day, a little later, I went into the Vienna Restaurant at Broadway and Tenth Street for luncheon. Near me sat my friend the banker. The sight of him made me feel sick. He saw me and—great Scott!—he was coming to my table. Depressed, humble, and red with embarrassment I arose and took his extended hand. He smiled, saying:

"Congratulations, my boy! There's nothing like good judgment."

Was he rubbing it in?

"Cheer up," he went on. "You have done very well. Did you get my letter?"

"No."

"Well, you will get it this evening. We bought the stock at 8 and it went off yesterday at 28."

I was breathing fast.

"You bought it at 8!"

"Yes. I put no price on your order to buy. I saw that your judgment was not with you, so I thought I'd lend you mine. I saw a specialist in your favorite stock, after you left my office, who told me that a shakeout was overdue. So I waited. When the hurricane had passed I executed your order. You have learned something that is worth more than the \$2,000 you have made. Don't be playing tips. Soon or late they'll break you."

Say, what a feeling of benevolence came over me! I was a changed man.

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## 7. HOT MINUTES

AT any time in life the next minute may be the biggest one you have known. It may even have the bigness of a year. Often it will give you a memory that is no unimportant piece of property.

Often this minute stuff has been flung into my life with remarkable results. I remember a day, when I was one of the editors of the *New York World*, a telegram halted my task. It was from an editor who had read the opening chapters of a novel begun long before and never finished. He offered me a liberal advance on royalties if I would immediately go to work on it. That minute changed the plan of my life and multiplied my income rather generously.

I remember a minute when I was sitting in a dentist's chair. The dentist spoke of a girl who was ruining his neighborhood with her extravagance. All the other girls were trying to keep up with her. He told of its effect on his own family. In a flash I got the idea for one of my most popular books—*Keeping Up With Lizzie*. I shall now recall a few minutes which have given me lasting amusement.

When I began to write books for a living I was greeted with an overwhelming rush of popularity. I began to have a fairly good opinion of myself until I set out for Boston one day. I observed that a number of people in the parlor car were reading my book. My seat was next to that of a man who was, I thought, a commercial traveler. He was reading the book. We greeted each other as I sat

down. I opened my newspaper and began to read. In a moment he turned to me and said:

"I think this is a bum book. Have you read it?"

This was like a slap in the face. Still, I did not lose my composure.

I looked at the book and answered: "Oh, yes. It took me a year to get through it."

Here was a hot minute in which I escaped telling him that I was the author of the book. I felt better when I learned that he was James J. Corbett, the pugilist.

However popular a book may be, who knows how many people regret their purchase of it. Certainly the author is not likely to know. An altogether special privilege had come to me.

I have had many curious compliments. Old ladies have often told me of keeping certain of my books at their bedsides and of going to sleep reading them every night. I got the notion that my books should be advertised as a remedy for insomnia. Then Don Seitz informed me that Dr. Hosmer had been reading *Keeping Up With Lizzie* to Mr. Joseph Pulitzer before he got the seizure that carried him away. This was a doubtful compliment for Lizzie.

I remember a midwinter night when I was to lecture in an old town on Cape Cod. I was delayed in getting to the lecture hall. The audience was impatient. The chairman, sitting on the platform, greeted me as if I were a long-lost brother, and turning to the audience said: "I am going to introduce to you a man whose name is a household word." He continued his eulogy. Suddenly it was evident that the household word had escaped his memory. He was temporizing and raking his mind for it. A look of relief came over his face. I saw that he had it. Stepping forward, his effort ended with the words: "Ladies and



gentlemen, I have the honor to present to you Mr. Eben Holden, the author of Irving Bacheller."

The audience greeted the words with a roar of laughter. That curious accident had made a hit—a kind of home run. It was up to me. In a fix like that one has to think quickly. The best I could do was this: "That is the meanest thing ever said about Eben Holden. If he were here I think he would answer: 'A man can't help makin' a mistake now and then.'"

On the platform one has to do unexpected things.

I remember another midwinter night when I had spoken in a city of 25,000 people in North Dakota. I learned at the hotel that to make my next engagement I would have to take a train at 3:20 A.M. The hotel man said that he would have the porter call me in good time and carry my bag to the all-night cafeteria, near the station, where I could get some breakfast. The porter called me. I dressed hurriedly and went with him over icy pavements in a bitter wind to the cafeteria. The only person there was a young woman, her arms bare to the elbows, sitting behind the counter and leaning forward over a magazine. Engrossed by some snappy tale, she did not look up as I advanced and sat down at the counter and asked:

"Would you mind giving me a little food? I'm in a hurry."

She looked up lazily and said pleasantly: "Don't get in a sweat, honey."

She shoved her book aside with a sigh and was on her feet. She touched a button and gave us more light.

"If there's any place in this town where a man can get in a sweat, I'd like to find it," I said.

She smiled without answering. I gave my order and began to look about me. It was the winter after Mr.

Hughes, to my deep regret, had been defeated for the presidency. Leaning against the copper coffee tank was a placard which announced: "Coffee hot as Hughes."

There were many placards in the room. On the wall behind the counter were three others which interested me:

Lobsters not on this side of the counter.

If you find any fault here keep it. It's yours.

Only part of a ham with each sandwich.

Above the pan of hard-boiled eggs was a card on a split stick which held the two words: "Auf wiedersehen."

There was still humor in the West. This kind of travel was hard work, but it was worth while.

Long before that time I was in a squad of horsemen riding from Yellowstone Park to Jackson's Hole. As was the custom, we stopped at a military post to register. The sergeant at the desk knew my name and said that he had read a number of my books. He told of reading *D'ri and I* when he was in camp on the Snake River with a number of jolly fellows who resented his attention to the book.

"I had left it leaning against a tree in whose shade I had been reading, to get a drink of water," he said. "While I was gone one of the boys took a shot at the book with his revolver. He ruined it. The bullet lodged in the leaves about halfway through the book."

A man, pretending to be a friend of mine, said: "Well, at last it's proved that it takes more than the energy of a bullet to get through one of Bacheller's books."

The roars of laughter that followed can be imagined. It was a hot minute for me. After the waves had passed, I said: "Boys, in this country carry one of my books in every pocket and two or three under your vests. You'll be a lot safer."

It was a lame return, but I had got a shot that would have disabled anyone.

Job Hedges was often at my house. One evening he told me of a hot minute in his life.

"It hit me like a sledge hammer," Job began. "It ruined the best speech I ever made and there were five thousand voters in the crowd and I was running for governor. Rows of the leading citizens sat behind me as I spoke. I got along famously with the crowd. I had reached the climax and was feeding out the uplift. It looked like a great killing. Suddenly something went wrong. The crowd was moving nervously. No one was paying any attention to me; there was a look of alarm on each of the five thousand faces that I was appealing to. My speech fell in ruins. Nothing like that had ever happened to me. My heart sank. What was the trouble? I turned and saw that a distinguished citizen, who sat in the first row behind me, was throwing a fit. One fit can ruin a campaign. If someone had thrown a fit near him while Demosthenes was delivering his 'De Corona,' I wonder if we should ever have heard of it."

I remember a hot minute in the sagebrush plains when Hepburn and I were staging from Kemmerer to Cora where our hunting outfit was waiting for us. At a lonely ranch entrance a woman got aboard. She took a box of cigars from her bag, lit one, and passed the box. She was genial, generous, and communicative. We soon knew that her husband had been killed in a fight, that she had carried on the ranch and brought up the children.

The next morning she sat between Hepburn and me on the front seat. At the extreme right was the reticent, solemn-faced, undersized man who drove. His name was Romeo. It had rained some in the night and in crossing a bit of low ground the front wheels sank so deep that the

horses were not able to move us. Romeo lashed and shouted with no success.

"Hell and bumblebees!" the woman exclaimed. "Ain't thar no man here who can swear?"

Romeo increased the scope of his vocabulary. The woman reached in front of me and grabbed the reins as she said: "Oh, Romeo! Romeo! If ye was talkin' to me I'd think ye was makin' love to me. Give me that whip."

She stood up. In a loud voice and with compound adjectives she reminded the horses of disagreeable facts in their family histories. As she cracked the whip she gave a yell that could have been heard a mile away. We went on and in a moment we could see a herd of antelope scampering over a hill far ahead of us.

She passed the reins to Romeo and sat down and calmly said: "Boy, what ye need in a case o' that kind is excitement a mile wide. Ye need a few mouthfuls o' real language an' a stout pair o' lungs."

I was on the *World* when Fitzsimmons fought Corbett in Carson City. The interest in this event was nationwide. The editorial council decided to engage the great John L. Sullivan, who had long since retired from the ring, to go to Carson City with the *World* reporters and give them help in writing the story of the fight. Mr. Eakins, the city editor, went on with the party. When he returned someone asked him how John had behaved.

He answered: "After the fashion of a Roman emperor wearied with adulation but willing to bear it for the people's sake."

During the fight Mrs. Fitzsimmons sat behind her husband's corner shouting encouraging remarks—not all of them quite fit for print. They expressed uncompimentary opinions of Mr. Corbett and suggested the treat-

ment he should receive. John was deeply interested in her words and manner. After Corbett had been knocked out by that solar plexus shot John went with the *World* reporters to their room. He was in a philosophic mood and in a minute he said a memorable thing about the power of woman.

"Boys, it was that woman that licked Corbett," he said. "When a man's wife is lookin' on he's twice as dangerous. Now ye take that fight o' mine with Charley Mitchell in France. I had him licked. Suddenly his wife yelled: 'Charley, remember yer wife an' little ones.' What happens? He lands a stiff punch an' widin a minute he spikes me in de leg."

Now here was something worth reporting. A famous editorial was written on "The Power of Woman."

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## 8. THE GREAT SECRET

### *In the True Story of a Long Married Life*

AFTER the passing of my wife, with whom I had lived happily for more than forty years, I wrote this for my adopted son who came to us when he was about two years old:

One thing I would not fail to leave you. It is a secret—if I may call it that—of my happy and contented life, a part of which you have shared. So, while the truth of the matter is clearly in my mind, I sit down to commit to you a little history of my loves, the first of which was my love of men, many kinds of men, which was born in me.

There is no art so useful as that of making friends and keeping them. Yet this gentle art will be of slight service to anyone unless it begins at home. There are many people who have not learned how to win and keep the friendship of a wife or a husband. They are careful to win and keep the friendship of those who command the way to success, but they are careless of him or her whose friendship is the thing most important to them. It commands the way to real happiness.

The love between a man and a woman is like a plant. It must grow or die. It cannot stand still. One's love either grows wider and deeper or it grows less. The first passion is not the real thing, it is only a phase of it, a kind of preparation. That will pass. It should be the beginning of

that affection which endures and is patient. If it is to grow it must have the bread of friendship and mutual sacrifice to feed upon. Love is capable of miracles, but there is one miracle which it cannot perform: It cannot fast and grow strong. It is like every other thing that has life. It must be fed. When you get a wife, don't expect the ravens to feed her love for you.

I used to struggle anxiously for success in my business and later in my craft. It came slowly. I find now in its delay a great kindness. I have seen many happenings to many people in my time, and have come to think that it is a misfortune for the young to achieve riches. The danger of disaster is too great. The strength of the young is for struggle. Therein is their great chance for real achievement and lasting happiness. What a rich and delightful comradeship I enjoyed in those years of hard work!

Once I saw a memorable meeting between two old comrades of the Civil War. They embraced each other as tears ran down their cheeks.

"My God, sir!" one of them exclaimed in explanation of his tears. "I love that man. He and I have fought and bled together and shared the same piece of hardtack."

It is the smooth and flowery path of ease that is dangerous. Shared troubles and hardships are the meat and bread of real affection.

If my wife had a good husband it was because she made me that by loving, faithful devotion. I know that I had a good wife. We got from each other the things we sowed.

What a harvest came to us! I had not dreamed that in all the fields of this world I could hope to see the like of it. Slowly an abiding conviction had reached us that

one had not to die to go to Paradise. We knew that we were in the midst of it.

Then suddenly she was called to another part of that wonderful country. I was alone, but my faith was strong for the trial.

We were very human. The result might have been different—so vastly different.

Now a word to you as to the seed of our harvest. It is mostly in the words "honor" and "judgment." Most men and women could be just as happily married as we, if they could put into the enterprise the same sense and honor that are needed in running a successful peanut stand. You could not succeed with inferior goods and dishonest measurements. You know the first step in making a hare pie is to catch your hare. The first step toward making a happy marriage is a decent boy and a decent girl. The world is full of them. They are not hard to find. Nobody of ordinary common sense can long be fooled in choosing a mate. It's as easy to distinguish between a good and a bad person as it is to tell a straight from a crooked stick. The first important function of the human intellect is to help one in choosing his mate and his way. If one is foolish enough to marry without consulting his intellect as well as his heart, he is almost sure to be unhappy.

Once the well-chosen two are married the rest is mostly up to the man. He is the leader, the captain, the pathfinder. Much depends upon his honor and courage and good faith. At the altar he has taken upon himself the most solemn and binding obligation known to this world of ours. Before God and man he has promised to be true to this woman of his choice, and leaving all others to cleave to her. Does he mean it? Is he honest in this great undertaking—as honest as he would be with a business partner? Will he treat his wife with as much good faith



as he gives to Smith and Jones, who are associated with him in the shop? Are the laws of God as sacred to him as the bylaws of his corporation? If so, there is not one chance in a hundred that his marriage will be unhappy, for the wife will be likely to follow in his footsteps whichever way they lead. It is natural that it should be so.

We should all understand that a man who is a traitor to his home, who breaks the heart and spirit of his wife and brings discredit upon his children, is guilty of the grossest breach of honor of which a man is capable. I would sooner forgive him who defaults in the counting room. There may be some faint flavor of righteousness in *his* motive, and he is always hoping to restore the sum he steals. In any event he is not seriously undermining the foundations of civilized life.

So many men try to stand on both sides of the fence in this matter—to be openly straight and secretly crooked. How sure they are to wreck their homes and build up a growing distrust of themselves! For here is a great truth. No man ever fooled his wife or his community for long as to the exact condition of his character. It will come out, somehow, in whispers that travel like the winds of heaven. You might as well try to keep the air out of your house. Then, too, the human eye has a power which is little comprehended of seeing the truth. The eyes and ears of the world are against the transgressor and they are many.

The happy home must be founded upon honor and built of sound timbers if it is to stand against the winds and floods.

Now I do not need to tell you that I am no angel. I have been no anemic halfman. I know what temptation means. Men and women who stand against it will need all the strength they have, and perhaps even a little more.

What do I mean by "a little more"? Well, think that out for yourself.

You will never forget the atmosphere which your mother created in the home which has been yours and mine. Simple as it was, the sacred light of beauty was there. It was loved and sought by many friends. That home had a voice, not of human lips, which spoke to one who entered it and seemed to say: "Here are peace and rest and comfort and perhaps even a greater treasure."

Whatever you have seen and felt in your home is the natural expression of happiness. Slovenliness and uncleanness are the voices of failure and discontent. Have you not observed that a happy spirit growing sweeter and cleaner, year by year, will clothe the body that holds it with a kind of beauty? The homely face of Abraham Lincoln became beautiful as his spirit developed and his ungainly physique assumed a majesty all its own. What is true of people is true of houses. A home will soon be beautiful, if its spirit is developing in the right direction; or unattractive, if its spirit is going wrong. It cannot help being so. That spirit will inevitably find the art of expressing itself in dress, in color, in furnishings, in music, and in its associates.

You may wish to know what it is that makes for the right spirit in one's home. Broadly speaking, it is the proper respect for beauty in nature, art, and personality, for good books, good pictures, good music, good people, good talk. It is the love of noble things and especially of friendship. The art of being a true friend is not well understood. There is an old saying that one who tastes your salt is sacred. Give him your best and protect him even from himself.

You will have observed that your mother and I had learned the gentle art of keeping peace. In the forty years of our wedded life a comradeship had grown up between

us which was the subject of much comment. What a help and joy it was to me!

I remember a time when we were first married and we went to visit my old mother. We were sitting together in the twilight of a summer day. I recall that my young wife had said something which displeased me, and I made a thoughtless and impatient remark. We were as sensitive as a pair of thoroughbred colts and were both hurt by what had been said. Then, as the light grew dim, my old mother talked to us of the gentle art of keeping step, of bearing and forbearing, and of the danger in hasty words. Of the things she said this I remember: "Every day, at least once, I want you to think of this: What can I do this day to show her that I really love her? What can I do to make him love me more? If you are ever angry with each other, don't speak, I beg of you, until the anger has passed."

It was a great lesson to us. In a sense we were re-married that night. I would not have you think that our relations became suddenly ideal, but from that day we made rapid progress in the art of self-adjustment.

We made our home as attractive as our means would let us. Everyone should do that, for his home is his gate to Paradise. If extravagance can ever be justified, it is in making a home. My wife had good taste, and I was fond of books. I bought a wagonload of them at a shop in New York, and we sat up half the night waiting for them to come. We had fitted up a study opening off the back parlor and built a bookcase into its long walls. The books brought into our home a new atmosphere and source of inspiration. The best company began to feel at home there.

My life was a very active one. Often I was getting home late to a dinner which had been carefully planned

and prepared for me. It was likely to be a spoiled dinner. Then there came a day illumined and memorable with revelation. Hard times had come to us. Our goods were mostly in storage. We were living in a little flat in Tarrytown. I was working on a novel. My wife had gone to New York for the day. It was a delightful summer day. I sat at my task until one o'clock and got a bite to eat. I didn't know quite what to do with myself then. Oh, the loneliness of that little flat! I read awhile. I sat and listened to the chirping of crickets and the drowsing of katydids. I worried. Suppose some evil thing should befall her in the big city?

I went to her bureau to look for a pair of nail scissors. What a treasure box of dainty and beautiful things was in that upper drawer! In what an orderly manner they had been laid away! Odors like the breath of dewy meadows came out to me. I looked in a box covered with red silk and embroidery. It held a package of letters bound together with the daintiest pink ribbon. I took it out of the box—a bundle of my old love letters—so carefully stored away! Why should she treasure them? I sat down and read them over. How boyish, how sophomoric, how crude, they were!—how utterly artless! How much better I could say it now. Yet she loved those silly letters. They were dear to her or she would not have put them away so carefully, so daintily. I returned the letters to their resting place and lay down upon the cushioned sofa. Oh, what a lonely place it was! I began to think of the past.

Eighteen years had gone by since that evening when we had sat together at the feet of my old mother, in the twilight, and listened to her wise counsel. They had been hard years full of anxious toil and small accomplishment. I could see that, as a husband, I had been more or less of a failure. She had seen little of me save when I had re-

turned to her, often at midnight, worn out by the burdens of the day. How many lonely hours, like these I was now spending, had been hers! True, I had tried to follow the good advice of my mother. I had brought my wife gifts, many gifts, bought in distant cities when in sheer loneliness my thoughts had turned homeward. I had gone to the limit in that matter, and yet I had given her not half enough of myself.

An idea came to me. She would be returning on the 6:10 train. She would be hungry and tired. I would have a dinner, fit for a queen, ready for her when she arrived! There would be fresh-cut roses on the table. I would broil a choice beefsteak basted with strips of bacon. I would have mushrooms and new asparagus and fresh tomatoes and lettuce and strawberries just out of the garden, and a pint bottle of cream, and coffee—for she loved my way of making coffee. I went out for a walk, and then I did my shopping with the greatest care. The beefsteak was cut from the loin of a young steer and was two inches thick. I returned a little before five with my arms full of roses and ferns and smilax. My goods were lying at the door. I got the fire going and set and decorated the table as if it were to hold a wedding feast. I made the salad and dressed the mushrooms and began my cooking. What fun I had anticipating her surprise and pleasure. The steak was ready, beautifully browned, under its melting crown of golden butter.

Put on as much butter as you think you need and then double the quantity. That was my rule in serving a steak. How delicious it looked, and its aroma was perfect! The mushrooms were ready. The strawberries were heaped in saucers of ancestral china and set upon graceful mats of smilax. The coffee was in the pot. The asparagus was steaming on a gold-rimmed platter. It was 6:20. She

would be coming in a minute or two. I went and looked out the window to see if she was near. Five minutes passed. I began to be anxious. What could have happened to her? I drew a chair to the window and sat watching; a quarter of an hour and still no sign of her.

"Good heaven!" I said to myself. "Isn't that like a woman? A man works himself tired to please her and she—"

I went to the stove. The steak was getting dry. The mushrooms had shriveled. The asparagus had a dejected look. I was irritated. The clock struck seven. I didn't care what happened now. My exertions had wearied me and I threw myself on the sofa to rest. Gosh! What a rankling, bitter sense of baffled effort filled my soul!

At a quarter after seven the bell rang. It was growing dusk. I arose and opened the door. There stood my adorable wife with a sweet smile.

"Hello, dear!" she exclaimed as we kissed each other. "How are you?"

"About all in!" I answered. "What in the world kept you so late?"

"Met an old friend and we sat down to talk in the station. Why, what is the matter? You look so cross."

"Anybody would be cross who has been treated as I have. Just look into the dining room," I said.

She followed me with exclamations of delight through the dining room and into the little kitchen. "Look at the dried beefsteak," I went on sadly. "Look at the mushrooms that are like India rubber. Look at the asparagus that has turned cold and stale. Look at your spoiled husband. If there were a man's page in the paper, I would write a letter to it on the subject of neglected husbands who spend their days in loneliness and their

strength in preparing dinners doomed to lie on a cooling stove until they are ruined."

We fell into each other's arms and laughed, and then we put the food on the table and sat down and had a wonderful hour together. She declared it was the finest dinner she had ever eaten in spite of its staleness. I—well, I was a wiser man after that, for I had tasted the bitter cup which is so often touching the lips of women.

I laid aside my novel to join the editorial staff of a great morning newspaper. We were living in New York. My wife fell ill. Her mother and a well-known physician were attending her. I returned to the apartment from my task one morning at two o'clock. A serious change had come over the patient. I could see it in her face. I went out and found one of the best physicians in the city and brought him to the bedside. It was none too soon. My wife was being mistreated. Her trouble was peritonitis, her condition serious. The doctor told us what to do. Through that night and until nine in the morning I was dipping and wringing hot cloths. It was that timely help which carried her over the danger point.

How sweet the sound of lover's tongues by night!  
When the eager youth seizes  
The white wonder of dear Juliet's hand  
And steals immortal blessing from her lips!

True, but never so sweet are they as in the night of pain and utter discouragement. Then, indeed, you get the full sweetness of the lover's tongue and a blessing from tender lips truly immortal.

I know, for I had had my turn of sickness and suffering and had learned what a good wife can do to keep a man in courage when it is growing faint. Together we had suffered failure, the pinch of hard times, the anxieties

of sickness, the peril of great loss. A man and wife who have not stood, side by side, through such troubles, may perhaps be fortunate, but they have missed the priceless thing which, if borne with good courage, makes a man and woman one and inseparable and gives them a peace and power beyond all measurement. We had stood the final trials of the thing called "love" and had entered upon a new era in our wedded life.

Success came to us swiftly, unexpectedly. It enjoyed our company as we enjoyed it. We were turning forty. The spirit of youth was still in us. Is it any wonder that when a degree of wealth had come to me I threw it at her feet and said: "It is as much yours as mine. I want you to go to the bank with me and leave your signature. Henceforward your check shall be honored, like my own, whenever it is presented." Always, after that, she had no need of asking me for any treasure which she desired.

She was wont to claim that an allowance would have suited her better, as her privilege had made her extremely careful. That was strictly true. Why should a man wait until he dies to trust his wife implicitly?

So now you know how simple is the secret of our happy life. We had no more love for each other than have most boys and girls who marry. But we managed to keep and increase our love instead of killing it, and mainly by being honest with each other. For all that I claim no credit. I would not have told you all these things save that you and others have made me believe that it ought to be told. If a time has really come when honor between men and women is in need of my humble recommendation, I give it freely.

I am lonely but not cast down. I know her spirit. It is still the same spirit that walked beside me. If I were to rest dejected in the shadow of my loneliness, I know what



this beloved Martha would be saying. She would be out of patience with me. So I go on, as of old, seeking, day by day, the things we loved together; companionship and beauty and a full use of the strength of mind and body.

It is, I think, proper that you should know that after we had lived together nearly thirty-five years, she wrote to me, on the 25th of July, 1917, a letter which I have greatly prized. In that letter she wrote—I was then in Europe: "You have been to me one of the dearest and best of husbands and I want you to know that you have made one creature supremely happy."

It was a long letter filled with like words and, really, while this world has been kind to me it has given me no reward that I value so highly.

That is the letter I wrote in 1924. In time I did what, I am sure, my wife would have wished me to do. I married her intimate friend, who has been, for eleven years, a loving and delightful comrade.



## PART II

### THINGS THAT TURNED ME TO SUCCESSFUL AUTHORSHIP



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## 9. NEW THINGS IN THE DRIFT

WE all have a length of beach on a mysterious sea. Interesting and often amazing things come drifting in, driven by winds and tides. I have read how Coleridge picked up the driftwood that entered into that wonderful structure of "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner." Coleridge had the help of a long beach, a rare sense of values, and winds straight from lands blessed with treasure.

We common folk may not look for like riches to be coming in with the winds of chance. Some of us have no eye for high values. It is all rubbish.

Many of us often find an interesting heap of things that have drifted in off the invisible sea. Soon we find that some of it has a value surprising to us.

When I found myself it was, I admit, a rather small discovery. Still, it threw some light on my road to happiness. I had been in business a number of years with no special talent for it. I had succeeded fairly well, through hard work, traveling back and forth across the continent, climbing ratty old stairways to editorial rooms—day and night—to sell the immortal tales of Kipling, Doyle, Conrad, Crane, Weyman, Hope, Jacobs, and Miss Wilkins for simultaneous publication in newspaper syndicates. Often my errands called me to France and England. Mine was a new idea, and in those days energy, hope, faith, and persuasion were needed at both ends of the road—the writer being at one end, the editor at the other. I was not quite happy, for I was fond of my wife and my home.

Now and then I got the notion that I could write.

I wrote a short tale under an assumed name. I sent it to the old *American Magazine* with two others, by writers fairly well known. To my surprise they accepted my story and returned the others. Still I was not unduly set up. I had no high opinion of that story.

I had begun to think of a character I had known in my youth who had got a wound in the Civil War that deprived him of his good sense. He was a harmless, half-witted, hard-working hired man. I got the idea for a ballad and satisfied myself that it was psychologically sound. I worked on it evenings and Sundays. Soon it got going and in a few weeks it was finished, although not quite in its final form.

I sent it to Bliss Carman, then literary editor of the *Independent*. Not twenty-four hours had passed when Mr. Carman accepted it with the words "This thing will travel." It did. It even crossed the seas and traveled throughout the English-speaking world. The public readers took it up and forty-six years ago it was heard in many theaters and churches.

Lately the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Company produced it on the screen with Chic Sale in the role of storyteller. Since then at least a thousand letters have come to me asking for copies of the ballad. If I had tried to comply with these requests I should have been busy for months.

So I present here the thing that gave me some slight standing as a literary man, for a distinguished professor of literature wrote that its tragic situation is unequaled in any story of war with which he was familiar. Anyhow, it was the best thing that had yet drifted to my beach.

## WHISPERIN' BILL

So yer runnin' fer Congress, mister. Le' me tell ye 'bout my son—

Might make you fellers carefuller down there in Washington—  
He clings to his rifle an' uniform—folks call him Whisperin' Bill;

An' I tell ye the war ain't over yit up here on Bowman's Hill.

I 'member when the war broke out, our Bill was past sixteen  
An' I'll say about as likely a lad as ever this world has seen.  
With gloomy news o' battles lost, the speeches an' all the noise  
I guess every farm in the neighborhood lost a part of its crop  
o' boys.

'Twas harvest time when Bill left hum; every stalk in the field  
o' rye

Stood up tip toe to see him off an' wave him a long good-bye;  
His sweetheart was here with some other gals—the sassy little  
miss!

An' purtendin' she wanted to whisper'n his ear she give him  
a rousin' kiss.

His mother she tol' him solemn when she knowed he was goin'  
away,

'At God'd take care o' him, mebbe, if he didn't fergit to pray;  
I couldn't control my feelin's but I tried with all my might  
An' his mother an' me stood a lookin' till Bill was out o' sight.

O his comrades has often said to me that Bill never flinched  
a bit

When every second a gap in the ranks tol' where a shell had hit.  
They went out for the dead and wounded men one quiet moon-  
less night

An' found Bill's body helpless, sir, but his mind was still in the  
fight.

His fingers was clutched in the dewy grass. Oh, no, sir, he  
wasn't dead

But he lay a-whisperin' crazy-like, with a rifle ball in his head.

The bullet was a pressin' on his brain since then it 'pears to me  
The rush an' roar o' the battle field is all he can hear an' see.

We was that anxious to see him we'd set up an' talk o' nights  
Till the break o' day had dimmed the stars an' put out the  
northern lights.

We waited an' watched a month or more an' the summer had  
nearly passed

When a letter come one day that said they'd started for hum  
at last.

I'll never fergit the day Bill come. 'Twas harvest time again,  
The wind that teched the yeller field was full o' the scent o'  
the grain.

An' the dooryard was full o' the neighbors who had come to  
share our joy

An' all of us sent up a mighty cheer at the sight o' that soldier  
boy.

Then all of a sudden somebody said: "My God! Don't the boy  
know his mother?"

An' Bill stood a-whisperin', fearful-like, an' starin' from one to  
another.

"Don't be afraid, Bill," says he to himself as he stood in his coat  
o' blue,

"God'll take care o' you, Bill, God'll take care o' you."

God a'mighty! he's pintin' his gun. Seems so he kind o' hears  
The awful roar o' the battle field a soundin' in his ears.  
Seems so the ghosts o' that bloody day was yellin' in his brain  
An' his feet they kind o' picked their way as if he saw the slain.

I grabbed his hand an' says I to Bill: "Don't ye 'member me?  
"I'm yer father don't ye know me? How skeery ye seem to be!"  
But I couldn't stop the battle, sir. It goes on day an' night  
He'll tire an' sleep an' then wake up in that everlastin' fight.

He's never knowed us since he come ner his sweetheart an' never  
will

Father an' mother an' sweetheart is all the same to Bill.



An' often we set up with the boy—sometimes the hull night  
through

An' we smooth his head an' say: "Yes, Bill. He'll surely take  
care o' you."

Ye can stop a war in a minute but when can ye stop the groans?  
Ye've sapped our blood an' bruk our hearts an' tore away our  
bones.

Ye've filled our souls with hellish hate that goes from sire to son  
So ye best be kind o' careful down there in Washington.

Another piece of driftwood brought in by the tide  
of memory gives a little of the color of my boyhood life  
on the farm. The faithful dog was one of my best friends.  
How often I have warmed my bare feet on a spot where  
some cow had lain after Shep had roused the big herd and  
begun to gather it.

Since it was dramatized by Chic Sale and his won-  
derful dog, on the screen, I have had many requests for its  
text and so it, too, becomes a part of these memories.

### OL' SHEP

Ol' crotchetty Shep!  
Can't hardly step  
Yer cup is purty nigh filled.  
Ol' age, gee whiz!  
An' rheumatiz!  
An' they say ye got to be killed.

We'll go to some spot  
In the pastur' lot.  
Here Shep come along with me.  
Way back in the time  
Ye was in yer prime  
How supple ye used to be.

As arrers go  
F'm a hickory bow  
I 'member how ye'd bound  
Down the long cow run,  
Toward the risin' sun,  
An' up to the mullen ground.

When the dew drops glowed  
Like di'monds sowed  
All over the fields complete.  
Where a cow had laid  
In some frosty glade  
I'd stan' an' warm my feet.

Look Shep. Do ye see  
That ol' Thorn tree  
At the top o' this rocky knool?  
'Member how we laid  
Half a day in its shade  
Watchin' a woodchuck hole?

I'd run away  
F'm school that day  
An' come home an' told a yarn  
An' when pa took me  
To the blue beech tree  
You run an' hid under the barn.

It raised my wool  
When the big, red bull  
Took after me one day  
I run like a deer  
An' you grabbed his ear  
An' drove him a mile away.

'Pon my soul!  
There's the swimmin' hole.  
I 'member how you an' I

By that alder clump  
Would run an' jump  
Down into the water sky

Kerwallop! An' then  
I 'member when  
I was drown'din' an' 'gun to shout  
You jumped in  
An' swum like sin  
An' by gravy! Ye pulled me out.

The case is in  
By gosh! You win.  
Can't do it. No siree!  
In yer hull life way  
There was never a day  
Ye wouldn't a died fer me.

Yer true an' yer brave  
Yer the world's best slave.  
It's too much like killin' a man.  
In my hull dinged race  
There's no honester face  
So live as long as ye can.

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## 10. THE SOUNDING STRINGS

As to my literary talent I was not easily convinced. I was still the doubting editor. True, I could write verse that traveled and I dreamed of doing the kind of thing for my countryside that Riley had done for the rural Middle West. I am sure that I could have won a degree of success in that work. The material was rich and abundant. It had yet to be proved that I could write prose of any real distinction.

After dinner the boys at the Sign of the Lanthorne amused each other with humorous poems and sketches of the town that presented rich and suggestive color. Soon these readings became a fixed feature of our after-dinner nights. These men were a hard lot to please. They would ridicule on small provocation, but never praise. It was understood that silence would be their only sign of approval. Often it would be broken by whispered words of enthusiasm.

About once a week I tramped around town looking for attractive color. One day, seeing the big viol sign above the door that led to Tubbs's old violin shop on the Bowery, I climbed a flight of stairs and opened a door, above which hung a clanging bell, and entered the shop. The clang of the bell had found a faint echo in many strings and sound chambers on the counter and along the walls. Mrs. Tubbs, a kindly woman, came out of a back room. In a few minutes I had won her confidence and she told me that Mr. Tubbs had the care of some of the most valuable violins in the world.

"There in that case is a Strad worth \$20,000," she said.

"Tell me, has an instrument like that a voice of its own which a connoisseur would recognize?" I asked.

"Yes, it has. The voice of no other violin is like it. The great Cremonas are like human beings. Each one has its own character and a voice to express it. You know, there is no other human voice in the world like yours. So it is with good violins. At the first sound you can tell one of the right breeding with the voice of a great soul in it or you can tell a worthless loafer of no account."

She told me of the wonderful voice of a certain Maggini which had long been in the shop. A man had come again and again to see it. He would look at it and thrum the strings and go away. It seemed as if he was in love with it.

"One day he came and I left him with the violin in his hands to get something in the back room. When I came out he was gone and the dear old Maggini was gone. When Mr. Tubbs came in and I told him he went a lead color."

When a man "went a lead color" something had happened to his soul. With that vivid and sufficient description of the effect of the news upon Mr. Tubbs I came away and began my thinking of the rich color in the old violin shop. Who wouldn't have found a story in the talk of the woman and the look of the place? It came along rather easily. As a bit of color it seemed to grow better as I worked on it. The little tale was near its final form when I took it with me to the dinner at the Sign of the Lanthorne. I was afraid of that tough crowd of literary gunmen. I was nervous when I began reading but soon I knew that the boys were with me. I finished in a dead silence that lasted for half a minute.

I had really done something—a little thing, to be

sure—in prose. It was promptly accepted and published in the *Cosmopolitan Magazine*—one of the best of the literary media.

In a few months Elbert Hubbard sought the privilege of putting it in two limited, de luxe editions, hand illumined, one in limp leather at \$2, one in morocco binding at \$10. These editions were soon sold and are now out of print. So I here present the little story that opened a new vista for me.

### THE STORY OF A PASSION

Bibbs's was a gloomy little heaven up one flight and Bibbs a bald, eccentric god of violins with a beard half as long as his body and white as snow. His windows overlooked the Bowery and their dusty panes hastened the twilight and delayed the dawn, robbing the day of an hour at each end. The elevated trains shook walls and windows with their noisy passing but, somehow, there was silence in the little shop. Or was it but the sign of silence that one saw on every side?—the hushed string, the dark, whisper-haunted caverns of spruce and maple, the uncommunicative Bibbs? Once it had been a busy place but the center of wealth and fashion had retreated from it, year by year, and now it was a mere hospital of old instruments. Some of them had voiced the noblest emotions of the human heart. Thro' one the soul of Ole Bull had spoken—of home, of love, of paradise, of all deep longings. With what stately rhythms, with what eloquent, majestic phrasing they had led the minds of men toward the great mysteries.

Some had been lying here for half a century and time had poured its floods of lights upon them and dipped them in the silence and the gloom of night and filtered thro' their fibers strains of song and sound till they were come

to years of understanding like to those of men and were getting voices fit for the telling of great things. Men came to buy them sometimes but of late had found it hard to deal with Bibbs. Raw toned young violins he sold and cheaply but not the old ones which had been his hope and company for years—not for all the wealth of Gotham. His love of them was constant and his price beyond all reason.

The sale of the Maggini had been a sorry bargain tho' it brought him twice its value. He had thought that no man would buy it at a price so high. The money was paid and the Maggini became the darling of a new owner who made off with it while Bibbs stood speechless and confused. Then, as the good wife was fond of telling, "he went a lead color" and to bed.

Now buyers came more rarely. His wife was dead and Bibbs lived quite alone.

## II

It was early twilight in the little shop. Bibbs lighted a candle, set aside his pots of glue and varnish and stood a moment thrumming on the solemn old Amati he had mended. He played a strain of music on its silver string. It was the Song of Faith from Elijah. A deep amen swept under the red dome of the bass viol that stood in a corner and a faint wail of sympathy rang in the sensitive, timbered chambers on the counter and along the walls—the sound of impatient, prisoned voices.

"Yes," said Bibbs, as if speaking to a friend. "But I say the song should be: O rest in Time for Time is the Lord and there's time enough to make all things perfect—even men. When you were only seventy years old I suppose the devil was in you as he is in me. Goodness is but

harmony and you will be better—you red bellied son of a whittler."

As had been his custom by day for years Bibbs carefully inspected the joinings of the Strad. He held his ear against it and the strings sang at the touch of his beard.

"That voice of yours!" he exclaimed. "I wonder what it will be a thousand years from now. Wood cannot last forever nor can flesh and bone. When your voice is near perfection you will not be strong enough to stand the strain of the strings and then—well, you're a good deal like a man—anyhow."

To Bibbs, heaven was the destination of good violins. "To hell with harps," he was wont to say and hell was, in his view, the home of fiddlers and their playing was the doom of the damned. He was wont to say that between earth and heaven was the great sea of silence and that noble music started waves that washed its further shore.

Bibbs put the Strad in its case and turned the key. He stood a moment silently filling his pipe. A melancholy cello lying near him loosed a string, humming like a love-sick maiden.

### III

Bibbs was about to make all fast and retire to his room behind the shop when suddenly the door opened, clanging the bell that hung above it. An old man with shaven, wrinkled face and long, white hair stood before him.

"Any old violins?" he asked, advancing toward the shop-keeper.

"None to sell," Bibbs curtly answered. Those days a buyer was an enemy.

"I do not wish to buy. I am a connoisseur and I love to look at them and hear their voices."

Now there were men to whom Bibbs gave some tol-



eration and even a degree of confidence—men who had grown old with violins and who loved them as he did.

"Sit down," said he, pointing to a chair. "I've an Amati, a Strad and a Guarnerius here. This is the Strad. It is not mine. I only take care of it. Play?"

"Once but not for years. My fingers have grown old. I fear that they have lost their magic. These wrinkles are like strings to bind them."

Bibbs took the Strad from its case. He thrummed it and then played the first phrases of *The Pilgrims' Chorus*. The stranger rose and staggered toward him with hands extended.

"Let me take it," said he and his lips trembled as he spoke.

"Stand back, you fool," Bibbs scolded. "You cannot buy this instrument. It is not for sale I tell you."

"I shall not try to buy it. You can trust it in my hands a moment. I—I have heard a voice that is dear to me."

Bibbs hesitated, surveying the stranger with suspicious eyes. He bolted the door.

"Be careful. Don't drop it," he said, as with anxious looks he put it in the stranger's hands.

The old man took the instrument and kissed its back and looked at it. He spoke the one word, *sweetheart*, and the strings fondly answered as he touched them with his thumb. Then fell that silence we know when words come to the lips and cannot pass. A moment or more it lasted and a strange vibration touched the heart of Bibbs. Then the silvery bell of old St. Andrew's in the Bowery wavered thro' the hush and broke the spell. The stranger spoke:

"Thirty years ago this Strad was mine. I fell ill and pledged it for a loan. That was in London. I was a long time between life and death and when I came to get the

Strad they had sold it for the debt. Listen! I will show you that it knows me."

He tuned the strings and played and as he played his fettered fingers were made free. His bow was like a trident quaking the sea of silence and waves of music started for its further strands. Far into the night the great winds of inspired song swept and lashed it—Liszt, Chopin, Beethoven, Bach. They ended with that hurricane of Paganini known as The Devil's Trill. The player stopped and mopped his brow.

What a silence was that which now fell upon them! Bibbs went to a window and flung it open. The old men stood looking out at stars in the sky. Neither spoke. An elevated train went crashing by. Bibbs closed the window. They returned to their chairs.

"Sorry you came here," said the old violin maker. "You cannot buy this instrument and now there's no peace for you."

"Unless you let me live with you and help you in your work," the stranger answered. "I have money and we both love music and you are quite alone."

"But the man who owns the Strad may come and take it away."

"He may not come for years and let's not borrow trouble."

So Bibbs made him welcome. The old men lived together happily but ever fearful. Every day they played together the Amati, the Guarnerius and the Strad and when the door bell rang there was a moment's panic in the shop. Those who came were curtly treated and they came no more.

#### IV

It was morning in the little shop. Bibbs came slowly out of his silent room, the Strad under his arm. He laid

the violin on the counter and lifted the window shades. His face was pale and haggard in the sun-light. He unbolted the door, took up the noble instrument and picked its strings. His beloved phrases from the Pilgrims' Chorus sounded faintly.

Suddenly the door opened and the bell above it clanged furiously. A man entered.

"Hello, Bibbs!" he said. "At last I've come to get the Strad."

As the beard of the old man swept the strings they sighed. He pointed at the sound scroll saying:

"In here I have heard angels singing. Aye, sir, I have heard them singing. In here I have heard voices from beyond the wall. Many men have filled its strings and timbers with their souls and gone away. Ghosts of the dead—perhaps a thousand ghosts are in it, sir, and today there's a new one."

"Bibbs, what do you mean?"

"That he is dead. The man who loved me and this instrument is dead. Take it, sir, and go away."

Its owner took it and as he went away he laughed and muttered, saying: "Bibbs is crazy."

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## 11. GENIUS

NEWSPAPER writing has been for many the gate to the path of glory. It was, I think, in the early nineties that a slim, modest young man came to my office with a bulky manuscript. He was Stephen Crane, and the manuscript was *The Red Badge of Courage*—a piece of driftwood that had stranded two or three times before it came to my beach. At least two magazines had declined it. The manuscript was slightly worn. Ed Marshall, a Sunday editor, and one of the most brilliant men on Park Row, had sent its author to me. He had told me of the boy Crane who lived in a colony of artist friends, and who made rather a poor living as a free-lance reporter. I went home with his script and spent a part of the night reading it. I found the story a vivid and powerful piece of work. One fact surprised me. Here and there I observed that Crane's sense of diction was, more or less, indifferent to grammatical rules. The slips were not glaring. His imagination would have run away with his mind in school. It would have been busy with the world around him. I have learned that he had been a poor student. To him prosaic lesson books would have been a bore. I have since met other men of genius like him.

I bought the serial rights of *The Red Badge* and put it out in the syndicate. A big thing never fails to produce a big effect. This did. The editor of the *Philadelphia Press* wrote that his fellow editors, the reporters, the compositors, even the pressmen, who had read the story, were eager to meet Crane. Would I bring him over? I did. The

thing that impressed me in this little journey was Crane's excitement over Kipling's ballads. His favorite was "The Young British Soldier." Two or three times, as we sat together, he repeated four of its lines and talked of their content. In this vivid flash was the spirit of an empire:

When you're wounded and left on Afghanistan's plains,  
And the women come out to cut up what remains,  
Jest roll to your rifle and blow out your brains  
An' go to your Gawd like a soldier.

I sent him to Mexico for new color. He wrote for me a number of vivid sketches of the life he saw there. The best of them was, I think, "The Ass Who Carried the Mountain"—if my memory of the title is correct. The things I published were put in scrapbooks and what became of them when I sold my business I know not. I fear that these interesting sketches are utterly lost.

There were a number of clever young writers on Park Row with whom I dined about once a week, generally at Mouquin's. We organized the Lanthorne Club for which we found a quaint little home on Monkey Hill in William Street. There we lunched every day and dined once a week. Those boys were a witty and irresponsible lot of Bohemians who knew the town and some were skilled in the gentle arts of separating a friend from his money. They were good fellows but they were able borrowers. They had mastered the profound strategies of poker.

When Crane returned he came into the Lanthorne Club. I warned him not to play poker with the boys but he had to get his trimming, and he did. What a guileless, gentle, lovable country boy he was! The Lanthornites were all fond of him. He was their hero.

He came naturally by his sympathy for the girls of the street—expressed in his row with a police officer who had arrested one of them—and in his vivid tale of Maggie. He had a chivalrous nature unfettered by conventional ideas of propriety. He had, moreover, a beautiful head and face. His eyes seemed to have a singular gift. They could see colors that were quite invisible to other eyes. I remember a night on the shore when we were looking seaward and he told of seeing colors that we were not able to distinguish.

The war with Spain was coming on and Stephen wanted to go to Cuba. I gave him \$700 in Spanish gold and sent him on his way. He had a belt of chamois skin in which his gold could be carried. He went to Jacksonville, where he waited more than a month before he put to sea in a tug with Scovil, the *World* correspondent. They were some sixty miles on their way when the tug-boat began to lose its bottom and they took to the open boat. Soon the story of "The Open Boat" came to me and a report from Stephen. Offshore the open boat had foundered. They had to swim. Before they took to the water Steve had thrown his gold into the sea.

I made no further effort to cover Cuba, and with my best wishes the young man went away for Mr. Hearst—the beginning of a long career as a war correspondent. It is to be regretted. A great genius for letters, in a rather frail setting, spent itself in hardship and exposure and in hasty writing to catch the first mail. When he gave up and went to London at last he was a wreck—his health and money gone. Joseph Conrad and Henry James befriended him. With \$500 given by James he went to the Harz Mountains to begin the hopeless task of recovering with the help of his faithful and devoted wife.

Eugene Field was another newspaperman—and always remained one. What a jovial good fellow he was! He had a great fondness for big, sonorous oaths. His voice was deep and vibrant, his love of chewing tobacco unequaled in my observation. We went together to the famous Bohemian resorts of New York. The most delightful one was Pedro's.

There was a man we used to see at Pedro's who deeply engaged our interest. He would have been a candidate for a novel if Dickens could have seen him. But first a word about the setting. Pedro was a little Spaniard, his place a rambling, one-storied structure in the shadow of old St. Andrew's Church, on Duane Street, near Centre. Its red entrance door led to the bar. Behind it was the cuisine and around it unexpected caverns, each with its dining party at night. Back of the closed doors one could hear a cheerful popping of corks and many compliments for the cooking. His quail, woodcock and squab, his old Burgundy and champagne—served always at a grateful temperature—were the talk of the town that knew Pedro.

The man who chiefly interested us was a Dutchman of the old Knickerbocker type, well past middle age, massive, large, round. He was a merryhearted Falstaff of a man, with long, white side whiskers and a protuberant abdomen. I am sure he had not seen his feet for many years. His sole business in life was filling his stomach with food and drink and his waking hours with joy.

His faithful coachman drove him to his office at twelve o'clock. There he drew \$50 in cash and proceeded to Pedro's little inn. His only daily task was that of spending \$50 for happiness.

The big round table was always ready for him, with bottles of rum and rye and Scotch and bourbon grouped in a circle at the center of it. He sat down to wait for his

retainers, the famous wits and storytellers of Park Row: Ed Mott, of the *Sun*; Nym Crinkle, of the *World*; Billy Fales, Ed Welch, and others quite as well known.

Pedro would welcome him and take his orders. Soon the table was filled. The jolly Dutchman was like a king with his jesters. For hours the room would ring with his laughter while his face glowed with benevolence. Field said that he had never seen a more inspiring array of whiskers or a happier face. We were invited to the big round table. Field was asked what he would have to drink. Bourbon, he answered. Lifting his glass, he said:

“Some lean to Canary  
And some to Medary,  
But it’s quite the contrary  
I take for my horn.  
Your foreign libation’s  
A mere aggravation  
When one’s education  
Inclines him to corn.”

A. C. Wheeler (Nym Crinkle) was the wittiest writer I have known on Park Row. Often his wit would cut to the bone. He was a man of intense feeling.

Ed Mott said to him: “I see that you have been pitching into my friend Eli Perkins.”

“Yes,” said Wheeler. “Armed with a sense of rectitude and a fine-tooth comb, I have entered the arena determined to remove Eli from the body of art.”

When the evening shadows began to fall, the king would count what remained of his cash, drive to the house of some poor widow on the East Side—no doubt, he had a list of them—and leave the money at her door. Then he hastened homeward.

A time came when he could not carry his huge bulk



and had to stay at home. There were those who said that he could no longer get in and out of its door. He was a product of that time when Delmonico and Riccadonna flourished on the profligate demands of the gourmand and when physicians were busy day and night and newspapers prospered on the advertisements of physic. The famous restaurants have ceased to pay. They have vanished. So have the quacks and pillmakers. Is it because science has taught us that overeating is the ablest ally of death? Perhaps the church has suffered because fewer people are in constant pain and fear of dissolution.

One day after two years' absence I dropped in at Pedro's. The place was deserted. The master was asleep in a chair. A waiter whispered that he had tuberculosis. The poor man awoke. He was but a shadow of his former self. He would have me drink a glass of wine with him. There was a curious pathos in his toast as he raised his glass and said:

"Happy days!"

Well, he was dying, the inn was dying and new days were coming for Pedro. They were near, and I hope that he found them better than any he had known.

But to return to my friend and companion in Bohemia. It is curious how little we suspect the things ahead of a man of genius with whom we are on familiar terms. Field gave me seventy pages of his manuscript on vellum done as only he could do it, with initials in color and quaint drawings. I gave it to a friend. It is now priceless.

In my editorial career I have seen young fellows of great talent come along, of whom big things were expected. Many of them have fallen by the way. One was ruined by a passion for poker. He spent himself in prodigious efforts to get something for nothing. He used to

tell me of thirty-six-hour sessions at the poker table. The main business of his life was that of recovering losses in cash and vitality. Yet he had a fancy unique and capable. It reminded me of Riley's and Field's.

Another candidate for the path of glory was a born gambler and lady-killer. No man I knew was quite so well prepared as he for a successful literary career. He had learning, humor, wit, ingenuity, and a brilliant style. Moreover, he had the keenest sense of powerful and dramatic effects. His ingenuity was often diverted to the delicate arts of ingratiation and of borrowing on a vanished credit. He was a master liar. The hearts of his friends had been toughened by his feet. They were like stone when he hove in sight. Yet we respected his talents. Moreover, there was a certain charm in his personality. Soon or late he would try his famous Brooklyn Bridge argument. It was a penetrating shot. With this he stormed your defenses. The cost of capitulation would be about \$25.

"I am going to jump off the Brooklyn Bridge," he would say with a sad countenance. "Damn my crooked soul! It's all up with me. I am here to thank you for all your kindness and to say goodbye. In two hours I shall be at the bottom of the East River."

Shocked by these solemn words, you would ask: "What's the trouble?"

"Oh, I'm up against it. I'm broke. I have neither money, courage, friends, nor self-respect. I'm done. There's no hope for me."

He would cover his face with his hands and shake his head. He looked as if he meant it; perhaps he did. Every decent man is a born lifesaver. This was like the cry of help out beyond the life lines. You thought of the long drop from the middle span of the bridge, of the noisome depths of dirty water below, and you forgot your own

needs. You became an importunate lender, begging him to take \$25 and brace up for a new start. He would resolve to do it. Again his life was saved. He lived to be an old man writing cheap thrillers for small pay. Always it cost \$10 to see him—a diversion that ceased to be worth the money.

I knew one literary genius who was a proved crook—and only one. He needed no more than a fair endowment of honesty to put him near the front rank. He set out on the shining path with the wrong pair of shoes on his feet. He was a handsome young man who came now and then to my office. He had a Dutch name but there was no trace of the foreigner in his talk or manners. He was one of the most remarkable characters I have known.

He explained that he was a cousin of one Victor L'Amoreaux—a gentleman who lived at Versailles, in France, and who was the nearest living relative of George Sand. The manuscripts of the gifted lady had come into L'Amoreaux's possession. Among them were many tales and essays never published. He, the man with the Dutch name, had been commissioned to translate the tales and was offering them for sale. This announcement was of unusual interest and the more so because of his calm, deliberate, and convincing manner of speech. He stammered a little. What an effect of candor is imparted by this infirmity! Often I have wondered if in his case it was real or assumed. The little habit gave him all the time necessary for a plausible answer when he was questioned.

He left with me a number of the translated tales. After all, the proof of the pudding was the eating of it. I read the tales and was astonished by their quality. My associates agreed with me that George Sand might well have written them. They were strong and vivid pictures of French life. I was convinced and bought them. I recall that dear old John Swinton, long one of Mr. Dana's

most brilliant helpers on the editorial page of the *Sun*, declared that a certain rustic tale in the series was the best piece of literary work that he had seen in years.

By and by the Dutchman sold an alleged posthumous novel of George Sand to one of the great magazines. The editors were more than satisfied with the quality of the story. They were enthusiastic. It was a masterful, romantic tale. They had published certain of the short pieces on their merit, but before advertising a long serial by the distinguished Frenchwoman it occurred to them that they ought to be sure of their claims. They sought proof as to L'Amoreaux and his relationship to the author and some account by him of how he happened to be in possession of her manuscripts. Their messenger learned that L'Amoreaux was a fiction and that Mme. Dudevant had left no posthumous work.

Now, here was a man of remarkable gifts. If he had played the game honestly he might have made a great success. He simply cheated himself out of a reputation and a distinguished career.

My observation is that talent is plentiful, but that character to support and direct it is rare. I have known at least a dozen men any one of whom could have won distinction in the art of writing if he had had self-restraint and a sound footing. It was Thoreau who said that when a man stands in his own way everything is in his way.

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## 12. UNKNOWN HUMORISTS

I JOGGED along to my young manhood with my feet on the ground out of which came all the strength I have been able to give to the problems of life. In the green, gray-bouldered slopes, the wooded ledges, the singing brooks and the great wilderness near our home I found the inspiration of beauty. The mother earth seems to give to men and to trees vitality and strength to wrestle with the winds.

For years after I began to live in New York City I went back to the soil as one returns to a beloved mother.

Two friends were often with me in this returning. They were James W. Johnson, my business partner, and A. Barton Hepburn, the eminent banker who was born in my "neck of the woods." Hepburn and I hunted and fished together in the barrens of Newfoundland, on the Gaspé Peninsula, and in the Rocky Mountains. He was a wit and the greatest master of the lost art of letter writing I have ever known.

One beautiful, sunlit day on the St. John River we stranded our canoes on a pebbly bar of sand and sat down for luncheon. As he ate he told me the best political story I have ever heard:

"I was the comptroller of the United States. Soon I had to appoint an assistant comptroller. I had been too busy to give the matter any thought. One day a man faultlessly dressed came into my office. High silk hat, gold-headed cane, impressive manners!

" 'I believe this is Mr. Hepburn?' he said, as he put

his hat on a table and flicked a speck of dust from his sleeve with a spotless handkerchief.

"'It is,' I answered.

"'I have the honor, sir, of presenting the application of Elijah Smith of San Francisco for the position of assistant comptroller.'

"He took a number of papers from his pocket and added: 'I also have the honor to present the endorsement of Mr. Smith by the two senators and all the congressmen from that state.'

"He put the application and the endorsement in my hands and went on: 'It gives me pleasure, sir, to be able to present to you the endorsement of the governor of California who has known Mr. Smith for many years and that of the vice-president of the United States.'

"More papers were passed to me and then the gentleman presented his own glowing endorsement of Elijah Smith.

"'I have known him, sir, for more than ten years. He is an able banker, an exemplary citizen, a good neighbor, a good husband, and a good father.'

"'You have made the application of Mr. Smith worthy of careful consideration,' I said, as he picked up his hat. I rose and accompanied him to the door. There he turned to me and said in a low tone: 'It only remains for me to add, sir, that I wouldn't hire Elijah Smith for a job as important as that of shoveling dung! Good day, sir.'"

George Curry was a son of the soil who reminded me of a mighty oak. Sometimes he indulged in a kind of fun that was unique.

He was a giant of a man, six-feet-two and broad at the shoulders. The other guides were wont to say he was "a hard man to handle." There was no one who cared to

disagree with him. When he set out for the fishing water, ten miles away, he never varied his mighty sweep of the oars.

One night everyone at Bishop's Hotel on the lake shore was awakened by a wild yell that rent the silence of the night. Its echoes ran away in the forest like a herd of bellowing bulls. Again it sounded. Many of us rose and stuck our heads out the front windows to see what was going on.

In the moonlight I could see a man in a boat near the shore just below.

"What ye yelling about?" I asked.

I recognized the voice of George Curry.

"Just want to be licked—that's all, mister. God knows a man that acts as I do orto be licked."

Another wild yell tore the air like a rocket.

"You're disturbing our rest," I said.

"An' I'm disturbin' my own rest. It's shameful. Abusin' myself an' everybody else. Some o' you men orto come down here an' give me a lickin'. I need it. Three or four o' you fellers orto be able to handle me."

Again he yelled.

"Ain't there nobody to obleege me?" he pleaded. "I'm behavin' as bad as I know how. If anyone livin' orto be pounded flat to the ground it's me. Come on—somebody. Don't keep me beggin' here all night."

Again that terrifying yell.

I said: "George, there's no man here who'd be willing to lick you if he could. Come in and go to bed."

"Can't afford it," he answered.

"Why not?"

"Cost me too much to git agoin'. I'll row over to the other hotel an' try my luck there. I'm tired o' wanderin'

round these woods tryin' to find someone who'll make me behave. By God! I be."

He shoved his boat off the beach, put his strength on the oars and was soon far out on the moonlit water.

I have seen the man sleep and heard him snore while rowing at night but he seemed to be able to keep his direction.

"French Louis" was near eighty years of age when I found him in his little camp on Canada Lake. I had made a long tramp with Isaiah Perkins from Jessup River to see this remarkable man. Canada Lake was a lonely bit of water about twenty miles from anywhere in 1911 when I saw it for the first and last time. We found Louis living in a little camp made by his own hands of small spruce logs rived and fitted with the bark on. He had a little garden, and a few chickens. These, with the fish of the lake and the cattle of the wilderness, gave him an abundance of food.

On the way in Isaiah gave me an account of French Louis's singular plan of life.

"Nobody offers Louis anything to drink when he is in camp," said my friend. "There are fifty-one weeks in the year when you couldn't pull him off the water wagon with a team of horses. Years ago it was a pleasure to come here and see Louis and hear his stories. It is fun to listen while he talks. But his friends do not come often these days. He has grown old and his camp is untidy. He lets things slide. He traps through the winter and goes out to Speculator with his pelts in the spring. When the last one has been sold he uses his money for an annual celebration. Gets drunk and stays drunk for a week or so and tries to break down the sobriety of the neighborhood. It is the primitive man bursting the



fetters of a monotonous rectitude. When his last cent is gone he tramps back to his camp and not a drop of liquor passes his lips until, again, he goes out with his pelts in the spring. I asked him once why he didn't save his money.

"'What I do with him?' he asked. 'The deer he no want him. The fish he no want him. He is no good for mak de vegetabull. I lose him may be. He mak me troub. He feel lak de boat on my back.'"

"What will become of him when his strength is gone?" I asked.

"Probably he will die in the woods alone as the wounded deer dies. His heart will fail suddenly."

Louis was glad to see us. I had a hard night with him. I have never known a greater enemy of sleep than the musty old hammock in which I sought repose and eating was still more difficult, but in the old man I found a richness of humor and dialect which kept me happy. I think that he told me the best story I have heard in my time. As he talked I was busy with my pencil making notes or the story would have been lost. I had then a memory trained to be useful but no memory could register and hold Louis's unreasonable treatment of the English language. It should be remembered that his final syllables were strongly accented, that he used *d* for *th* and *bin* for *have been*. This is the story:

"By cripe, he's a purty bad fishin'. I bin los' all de bigges' fish what I git hol' of it. I bin kill de time away more dan I tink I can stan it for lose him all one day so I tol' myself dat I got a good deal o' boat what needs a paint an' I tink I go shore for paint him up. I mak some hots water for cook tea. Purty quick long come Mose St. Germain. He mak de yell lak a man when he have de money too much an de whisky spoil him up. I bin scare.

I say 'What de troub?' He say 'Mak hurry up so fas' ye can't. Bring it de hax for git de bear.'

"He run lak buck deer. I keep close to him's coat-tail. Purty quick we see Pete Levine. He stan him up by beeg tree. By cripe, he trembull like somebody scare him up inside. I tol' him what de troub?

"He say 'Little bear been climb up tree. By cripe, lak nough big bear come an' try it for climb up Pete Levine.'

"I courage him up much I bin could do it an' I tol' him for take hax an' chop down de tree down. Lak nough I ketch little bear maybe.

"Pete he bin chop. Mose he bin chop. Bym-by de tree he begin for trembull. By cripe, little bear he bin hollaire lak he no tink we was use him right. De tree bin fall. I bin ketch little bear. I hol' on to him—he hol' on to me with him toenail. By cripe, I fin' it out someting ver' much. Little bear when he bin up tree not so beeg lak when ye git hol' of it. When ye git hol' of it he lose him tempaire. I have hol' o' him hair. He have hol' o' my meat. I try for skìn him, he try for skin me. By cripe, I fin' it out he goin' git through firs'. I don' know what he was do if it not bin I tol' him 'ye damn fool, le' go. Go on 'bout yer business.'

"I bin git myself purty scratch. Oh, le bon Dieu! I fin' it out man toenail no can stan' it for mak de scratch with bear toenail."

This delightful bit of philosophy ended the story. I regret that I could not have dug for a year in this remarkable mine of humor but a twenty-mile tramp and the dirty camp kept me away.

Eithel Wilcox was one of the mighty hunters with a gift of humor. He had also great common sense and excellent character. A. B. Hepburn used to say that a liberal

education might have made Wilcox a big man. He was handicapped, however, by a defective palate which caused him to talk through his nose. This peculiarity gave to his humor a singular quaintness. There is nothing in my memory quite like the effect of it. My friend Judge Theodore Swift of Potsdam was often in the woods with Eithel. He knew the great guide as no other man knew him. I have heard Swift imitate his remarkable dialect by the hour.

The genial jurist is now gone and so I set myself the task of rescuing from oblivion one or more of these delightful relics of a great generation.

"I was a young boy when I first went into the woods with him," said Swift. "The first morning while Eithel was making a fire I went over to the spring for a pail of water. I saw many deer tracks in the soft earth around the spring. I called loudly to Eithel. He came over.

" 'There must have been a dozen deer here last night,' I said. 'Look at these tracks.' "

"He glanced at them and answered: 'Boy, ye know a deer has four feet an' every time he steps he puts 'em all on the ground.' "

Next day they were tramping along a mossy trail in thick woods. Young Swift was carrying a rifle. Suddenly a black bear rounded a bend in the trail and trotted toward them. He had come within about fifty feet of the hunters before he saw them. The boy raised his rifle and fired. The bear, having turned quickly, leaped into the bushes. The two ran after him. Eithel found a few drops of blood on the bushes but the bear was gone. They trailed him for miles, the sign growing fainter. They came to a place where the bear had squeezed through a thicket of cedars. On one of them was some hair and dry blood.

Eithel turned to the boy and said:

"It ain't no use. That bear is wounded in the hind-quarters an' he's travelin' fast."

They set out for the trail. Eithel stopped him and said:

"Boy, when ye see a bear an' he's lookin' right at ye it's a good idee to shoot at the end that's towards ye."

Wilcox was a man of steady habits. These great men of the woods could be trusted when at work. But when the season was near its end they were likely to invest a part of their money in a week or so of joy and loud talk in which they freely gave air to their suppressed opinions.

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### 13. GREAT SCOTT

#### *The Storyteller of Lost Lake*

THE most remarkable character I have known is undoubtedly Philo Scott. He was the last of the sturdy old guides. Born in the lonely edge of the wilderness about 1840, he had got from his fathers a dialect that belonged to the last quarter of the eighteenth century. I studied it with care and have found it a paying mine of character talk.

Philo's mind was a curiosity shop; his body a power plant with energy enough in it for three men, a dog, and a pair of horses. He was like an old tree bent by high winds but still defying them with abundant vitality. He was indeed a brother of the trees. In a frigid valley of the Adirondacks he chopped through the long winter and in the spring he used to say that his sap was goin' up. In the early summer he became a part of the deep woods wherein he had a camp and a garden on Big Deer Pond often called Lost Lake.

Every year he moved to the cluster of log huts with boyish enthusiasm, his fretful little wife with him. He carried a heavy pack, a gun and often a pet coon in a cage. In bad footing he carried the gun and coon in one hand and lifted his wife with the free arm and strode through the mire while she loudly complained of her discomfort.

"Wal, Mis' Scott," he'd say. "Hold yer temper. We're over the worst of it."

His most severe rejoinder was that of calling her "Mis' Scott." In his part of the country where you dropped the first name and called one Mis' or Mr. it was a token of reproof—the first step in a rupture of friendly relations. Often she would answer: "Stop Mis' Scottin' me, if ye please. I've had all the Mis' Scottin' I need."

She might continue her scolding but he made no answer. Having arrived, he tumbled the beds out into the sunlight to be aired and dried and began to get his cracked and rusty cookstove piped, cleaned, and in order. He was a great mender and the blankets and furniture needed repair. Then he planted his garden. When every detail was ready for the coming of the early fishermen the problem of provisions was complicated by a journey of 26 miles to and from the source of supply.

A big-boned man nearly six feet tall, he tramped with long strides in a limp, loose-jointed fashion throwing his feet forward with the sway of his body. I never saw a more awkward mover on a trail but the rapidity with which he covered ground was appalling to one who tried to keep his pace. In his spirit and manner of life he was essentially an eighteenth century man depending on his own strength. He was an old man when he took his first ride on a railroad.

One summer he got what he called the "syphone idee." His spring was a little above the camp and about twenty rods away. Iron pipe could bring the water to a convenient point by gravity but the pipe would have to be bent down into the spring, and how to start the flow was his problem. From someone he got "the syphone idee of h'isting the water by suction." Having hauled the pipe to camp on a jumper, he connected it and bent its upper end into the spring. Then came the modern problem of starting the flow. With sublime faith in himself he got

down on his hands and knees, taking the pipe end in his mouth, and applied to it all the power of suction he had in his body. It was insufficient. He "sucked an' drewed an' drewed an' sucked for a time but couldn't fetch her." No wonder, for the pipe was nearly two hundred feet long. Mrs. Scott watched him with amused disapproval. "Philo, stop strugglin'," she said, "Ye'll bust yer-self."

He arose and shook his head mournfully saying: "It ain't in my mortal frame to do it. That's a bigger job o' suckin' than it looks for. It'll cost money but I'll hev to git a pump."

That he did. The water began flowing and continued to flow. It was the pride of his heart. After that he called himself "the champion water h'ister of the Adirondacks."

After supper he worked till dark in the garden so that his midsummer guests could have peas and beans and radishes and squash and strawberries. In addition to that, he cut the wood and did all the fetching. If Mis' Scott was poorly as often happened, he also did the cooking and made the beds. Often he was out of temper.

All sportsmen had to be up for breakfast served soon after daylight. He would have no late sleepers in his camp. Philo could not understand why a man should care to sleep after daylight. He would not put up with it. A raucous dinner horn announced the rising time. If one lingered there was loud talk about lazy men. He had no hesitation in expressing his opinion of a guest. From daylight to dark in camp we could hear the steady droning of his voice. We called it "Philoing." When he was alone he talked to himself.

At breakfast we always ate "griddlers"—big, broad, well-browned griddlers and delicious maple syrup, and bacon and coffee.

Almost every summer Philo had a little museum of wild animals at the camp—a fox chained to a pivoted pole that gave him a circular runway, a coon, or a young cub.

One day he was on the inlet of the lake with his rifle when he saw a blue heron catching small trout and swallowing them. The heron is undoubtedly a great destroyer of small game fish. Philo raised his gun and was taking aim when the big bird rose in the air. The shot broke a wing. The heron came back to earth. Here was a candidate for the museum. Philo and the bird had a foot race. The man won but not until he had learned that a heron can step lively and put up an able defense when its liberty is in peril. In his pocket he had a heavy fishline with a big cork on it—a part of his outfit for catching bullpout, of which he was very fond. A guest finally saw Philo come into camp leading the reluctant heron, with the fishline tied around the bird's neck.

"What ye got the cork on his bill for?" the man asked.

"So's't' he can't peck," said Philo.

"Can he peck?"

"Tol'able severe. When he hits anything he calculates to put a hole in it an' he ain't often disapp'inted. If ye don't think so, let him fetch ye a peck."

Often he was in a gentle mood when winding from the skein of his memory. His talk would be broken here and there by affirmatory interjections almost whispered. They were: "Uh huh! Ay uh! It's a fact."

To hear one of his stories was an experience the like of which few men have had. I took notes on his method and probably no man living knows it as I know it. A Philo Scott story was a curious, zigzag complex of incidents. He could not go straight, for one event would remind him of another that was too important to be neg-



lected. There would be sudden shifts of scene and tense and curious clauses introduced by the word "which."

One warm summer day I was at work on the veranda of my little study in the woods when Philo Scott came up the hill to see me. I made him welcome. He was in a communicative mood and I had my pad and pencil. This is the story that he told me and I think I have never heard a narrative so remarkable. It stands alone. Its title is:

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### THE ZIG ZAG STORY

One day I started fer to go to my traps with ol' Susy which ye know I had two hounds, Susy and Tige. Susy, w'y ye know, she'd lock jaws with a lion if I told her to. Ay yuh! uh huh! I seen they was a bear in the trap an' Susy—say, she was a dandy which there ain't no mistake. Got her from Ad'rondack Murray. W'y! didn't you know 'at I knew him? Guided him fer years. Uh huh! Ayes! W'y one day me an' him was a floatin' on Surnac which was a Friday. No twant. Twas a Thursday. Bert Dobson an' his wife come along in a canoe kind o' foolin' with one 'nother an' all to once they upsot an' in she went. I see she was a-gugglin' there in the water so in I jumps a'ter her. W'y I'd knowed her ever since she was that high. Ayes sir! uh huh! Knowed her since she was a baby. An' one day I carried her on my back more'n twenty mile which ye know we was a stout fam'ly. My mother'd think nothin' o' doin her mornin's work which she'd six cows to milk and hippin' a baby off five mile fer a visit, an' be back in time to git supper ready. Ayuh! Uh huh! W'y ye know folks was diff'rent them days. My mother had 'leven children an' my wife had ten an' when Susy the

second child was born, ye know, I named her a'ter my houn'. I was over to Surnac the same as Monday which the child was born Tuesday night, I got to worryin' an' I put her through the woods eighty-five mile with a small boat on my back 'cept when I come to water. Made it inside o' twenty-four hours. Uh huh, I did! An' say goin' up the Bog River that evenin' I hearn a panther kind o' purrin' in the brush. Ay uh! They will. An' say, did ye know that a panther can't run more'n half a dozen jumps? W'y their lungs ain't bigger'n yer two fists. No sir. Ain't got no pump fer wind, but say, can't they grab a deer? W'y one night I was a floatin' an' I knocked a hole in a deer an' when I was a draggin' of him out I hearn a noise kind o' like that . . . (makes a purring sound) . . . Tow I wa'n't scairt I slit the deer open an' was a-dressin' of him off an' say did ye know that a deer ain't got no gall on their livers? Ye know that's the reason they can eat p'ison. W'y one day Senator White come over to my camp. We went out an' tuk our rifles along fer to keep the deer f'om harmin' of us. We got over to Nick Pond, an' there was a big buck out on the Rocky Pint where the Lone Pine is, an' I could see a panther out on a bough o' that pine right above the deer. The Senator had been showin' me a writin' 'bout me in the Sarycuse paper. I was down there the year before. W'y ayuh! Didn't you know that the Sarycuse sportin' club ast me down there. I went. Got up one mornin' at daylight an' went over to Short Lake Store for a load o' pervisions an' fetched up at Newhasane in time fer the noon train, an' say they was a man lay drunk on the track down by the switch an' the train a-comin' 'bout a mile off like a buck deer when you've ript the seat of his pants a little. I run down to where the man was, an' stubbed my toe on that damn' switch an' fell flat. I never was so mad at any switch in my life 'cept

the one I invented. W'ye ay uh! didn't ye know I invented a switch? Good land yes! an' this is the idee of it.

In telling the story I always stop at the switch. The last time I saw Uncle Fie—the name by which his friends knew him—he had developed what he called a “verycus vein” and had kidney trouble. He had bought a bottle of kidney and liver cure and confidently expected that “it would fetch her.” It is curious that his impersonal enemies were always given, in his talk, the feminine gender. He seemed to regard a serious problem as something in the nature of a woman. The truth is, this ingenious mender could not mend himself. Suddenly the great tree fell.

He lived and talked and died as did the men of old. That last day he probably had his boots on, looking for the return of a strength literally worn out.

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## 14. HOLY POKER

### *A Story of a Great "Sucker Trap" in the Old Northwest*

IN a town near where I was born one of the great pioneers, now an old man, is still living. Some fifty years ago alone in a canoe he descended the Athabasca River to Great Slave Lake, crossed it, and went down the Mackenzie—a journey of more than 3,000 miles in the wildest country on this continent. Probably no man in the world has the inland sky and water wisdom of Sile Malterner. It is like that of the wild goose. Sile's language those days reminds me of a bucking bronco. Often it tossed him out of the saddle of a calm historian and the air was cut by expletives not often found in well-laundered English. So the reporter who seeks to reproduce his vividness faces a problem.

I was on a river with him in Canada when he told me a poker story too good to be lost. This is the story about as he told it:

One night I got to Edmonton. Hell yes! Even then it was quite a town. The hotel was kept by a Chinaman, name o' Wong Lee. Smart feller! Spoke English. I went into the barroom. Big poker game goin' on there—biggest game I ever see! Plenty o' money in that town to play with. It was fur money. The mayor, some slick-lookin' gents from the East, an' a couple o' roughnecks wearin' spectacles with colored glass in 'em was playin'. The glass in one pair o' them spectacles was pea green. I noticed that

'cause the man looked up at me fer half a minute when I come in. I'd seen a lot o' fellers with colored glasses in that country. Ye know, some men git snow blind up there in the North. The player with the pea-green spectacles looked up ag'in at me. The others eyed me plenty. I didn't want to git shot so I went back to the bar where I couldn't see no cards.

"This feller's all right, boys," says Wong. "Just come up the river from the north."

The game went on an' I stood there where I couldn't see nothin' but the chips an' the players. Hell and deep snow! That man with the pea-green spectacles had a year's wages in front o' him. When he lost an' sometimes when he didn't he'd tear up the cards an' call fer a new pack. A number o' times he done that.

Then he won with a full house. Threes er better called fer a jack pot. So a ten-dollar jack started. Nobody opened. The pot was sweetened with five more.

They all come in. The cards was dealt an' the mayor opened fer ten dollars.

"'Taint 'nough, I'll double it," says the man with the green glasses. Only four stayed in. The mayor bet the limit—fifty dollars. The green-glass man doubled the bet. The other two come along in. The mayor doubled ag'in. Say, by the white throne o' God! I never see nothin' like it. The money was meltin' like snow in the spring-time an' pourin' into that pond in the middle o' the table! The mayor an' that green-eyed son o' Satan kep' doublin' till, by an' by, the bet was called. I dunno what they had but they all threw down an' the man with the green spectacles reached out with both hands an' raked in the money.

I had a bite to eat an' went to bed an' was off early in the mornin'. Didn't think no more o' that damn' poker

game. Almos' fergot it till I got to Athabasca Landin' one day awhile later to take a steamboat. The ol' boat was at her dock loadin' wood fer the engine. I got on when she blew her whistle.

We'd been chuggin' along awhile when I see a man lookin' at me.

"Who is that man?" I says to the feller I was talkin' with.

"Don't know," says he. "He looks like the Peleus Kid. If it is, don't play no poker er start no row with him."

The man come up to me an' says: "Glad to see ye ag'in, stranger."

"I ain't got no recollection o' meetin' you before," I says. "Who be ye?"

"Bill Somers. I ain't no Napoleon Bonaparte but you see me fight a battle that was a kind of a Waterloo. Do ye 'member that game o' poker at Wong Lee's? You watched it fer a while. I was the man that wore the pea-green spectacles."

"Say, man, you won a sledload o' mink an' ermine an' a team o' dogs," says I.

He smiled kind o' friendly an' says he: "Look here, boy. Poker is a canoe trip in a long, bad stretch o' rapids. Ye got to know how to read water an' steer right er some rock will hit yer bottom like a sledge hammer an' the next one may rip yer belly open."

"I made up my mind that ye knew how to read the rapids when ye kep' raisin' 'em in that jack pot," says I.

He laughed an' says he: "Don't git in a hurry, stranger. Them boys thought they had a sucker. They was dreamin' an' I woke 'em up. They tried the old plan o' five hands agin one but it didn't work. They ruined a friend o' mine last year. He'd been in the East an' was comin' home to git married. When they got through with him

he was like a worthless dog that's had a row with a skunk. They had a nice, safe little trick. They'd git a stranger into the game an' then, boy, he begun to bump the rocks. They all played agin him an' divided his money. They kep' him between hell an' high water. Them fellers run the town, an' the ol' sucker trap. Now listen to me. I'm a real pious man."

He stopped an' lit his pipe. Say, ye know, he looked kind o' pious. Damned if he didn't.

The feller says to me, says he: "Ye know a pious man can have guts in him. He needs 'em in the Northwest. I carry a gun an' can pull an' shove lead rather sudden if I have to. My fam'ly don't worry much 'bout *me!*"

That cuss tol' me a story then that put a kink in my hair an' made my back feel kind o' chilly. I wouldn't 'a' give the fill o' yer pipe fer his piety. I says to myself there's a man with a soul like a wooden leg.

"I got my plow an' harrer ready," says Bill Somers. "My pard made Edmonton two weeks ahead o' me. He pertended to be drunk an' he went from one store to another an' bought all the playin' cards in that town, took 'em to his room, unsealed the wrappers an' marked every card. He sealed 'em up ag'in so ye'd never know they'd been opened. The next day he went around among the stores an' says he: 'I was drunk las' night an' when I git drunk I ain't got no more sense than a jackass hit by lightnin'. I'd jump into a river to git out o' the rain. I bought all the playin' cards you had an' I ain't got no more use fer 'em than I'd have fer a ton o' beefsteak. Maybe ye'd take 'em back at half the price I paid.'

"They was glad to take 'em. So the marked cards was ready fer their part o' the job. I tell ye, boss, I'd known that pardner o' mine fer years. Give his talents a fair

chance an' ye can trust him to do his best. Like as not he'll surprise ye with the results. But he's the only man I know that has a soul that ain't worth savin'. No, sir. Try it an' there'll be a horse on you. It has lost its grinders, an' the hay o' God's grace will lay untouched in the manger. He's the only man I ever knew who would go up fer prayers an' pick a pocket while he was kneelin'.

"I put up at Wong Lee's an' went around takin' orders for the Babcock Washin' Machine. Yes, sir, that's a part o' my job. I got acquainted with the mayor, two fur buyers, and two other men said to be from Montreal. The mayor wanted to entertain the Montrealers—the old gag. He proposed the poker game. It wouldn't 'a' been good manners fer me to do it. I always carry with me a cashier's check fer a thousand dollars. It's better than a high hat. The mayor got it cashed fer me an' I could see that he thought I was a promisin' young man. I was wearin' the pea-green glasses every day an' I says to Wong, 'I want to know that the cards are all right. Go out an' buy a dozen packs. When I play I want to be sure 'bout the cards.' So when the game begun the cards was all as honest as the mayor an' the Montrealers. Ye know I like to have things match. If yer goin' to have a race, git an even start."

He laughed an' I says: "All marked, o' course."

"Marked! Ye could bet your life on that."

"How did ye mark 'em?"

"You write a word on the back of a playin' card with a certain chemical. Ye won't be able to read it 'less ye put on pea-green spectacles. Then it stands out as plain as yer whiskers. Ye got to watch the cards careful as they come out an' have a good memory. In a few hands the chemical wears off. Then ye call fer a new pack."



"Well, of all the poker players I ever heard of, you're the king," says I.

"You'd never earn a pound o' pork in a hog guessin'," says he; "used to be that but I have been out o' practice fer years. I was tryin' to rob some robbers an' ye can't do it an' keep in the straight an' narrer way.

"At eleven o'clock the marked cards was all tore up. I took off the glasses. My winnings was big enough as an argument. I was goin' to play a Scotch game an' keep out o' trouble. We'd all agreed to quit at twelve.

"A new pack come in play. That was the most righteous pack o' cards ever shuffled. Seems so its aces an' kings an' queens had agreed to pull together. I'd draw to two of 'em an' in the three cards flung down in front o' me there'd be two more sayin', 'Hello, Bill Somers, give 'em a ride.' The jacks an' tens an' nine spots had combined to help them other fellers down the slope to blue ruin. Ye know, four jacks er four tens'll give ye consid'able confidence but—God bless my soul!—how they can string a man at a fifty-dollar limit. The profanity flows like blood after a bullet an' keeps drippin'.

"I felt sorry. One o' them fellers could throw a stream o' swearin' over a barn an' make a hole in the ground on the other side of it. I spoke up kind o' soothin' an' I says: 'Boys, hadn't ye better quit?'

"They wouldn't hear to it, an' say, when a man is mad at his luck soothin' syrup don't do him no good. It's like puttin' liniment on a sore. It don't help none. That kind o' madness is the rope o' the devil. At one o'clock I had checks an' I.O.U. slips an' all the money. It was a mas-sacreel!

"'You've got me ruined,' says the mayor.

"'Me too,' says another gent. 'I ain't got enough left to buy a beefsteak.'

"They'd wore the mad all off themselves an' cooled down. Didn't have no more bark than a dead dog. The ol' Sucker Trap was busted.

" 'Now, gents,' says I, 'you've ruined a lot o' men but ye never unruined one o' 'em. I'm goin' to give all o' ye a new job an' if ye do it well I'll unruin every one o' ye.'

" 'What kind of a job?' one of 'em asked.

" 'Livin' honest. You ain't used to that kind o' thing. It'll come hard but I'll be here to help ye an' the money will be safe in the bank.'

"I started my meetin's the next night. Ev'ry one o' them come up fer prayers. I've saved two hundred souls in that town. I'm goin' back in three months. If I find them men have stuck to the job, they'll git their money back. If not it'll go to the poor."

"That was the only game o' holy poker I ever heard of," said Sile.

PART III

SELECTIONS FROM MY WRITINGS



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## 15. "EBEN HOLDEN"

### *Just How It Was Begun and Finished and the Product of the First Two Days of Writing*

As the readers of your first important novel are numbered by the million I would like you to tell us all about the writing of that book. I want to know what was going on in your mind as you began and as the story developed. I wish you would quote some things from it which gave you satisfaction and the courage to go on."

These are the words of the able editor of this volume, whose judgment I value. It took a degree of courage to begin the writing of *Eben Holden* but my wife and I had more than enough for the task. We knew that the wolf was always howling at the door of the poet and the novelist unless he was in great favor with the gods. I was then forty years of age. For fourteen years I had been an editor on Park Row and had seen many an able fellow lured to poverty and distress by the pipe of the Muse.

I had just resigned a job that paid me a good salary because the conditions that surrounded me were impossible to one of my temperament. I had only a few hundred dollars in the bank. Our outlook was a trifle clouded. We did not know what was ahead of us. We were living in a little apartment above a drugstore in Tarrytown—a small but cozy and comfortable home. It was the summer of 1898.

My vivid memories of the North Country and its

characters had been urging me to write. At last a plan was in my mind involving the old man, with the boy in a basket, and the farm dog moving westward out of Vermont through the deep woods which I knew as well as I knew the multiplication table. I knew my old man as well as I had known my father. He had been one of the hired men on our farm. The pack basket had been on my back in many a tiresome journey in the wilderness. As to the small boy, I had rather vivid memories of my own young boyhood to help me. The people we were to meet along the way were to be like those I had known in my youth. I had planned no adventures for the journey, yet there was quite a chain of them in my own experience. The changing scenes as we went along would suggest the things to happen. I knew the danger of any note that would mar the seeming reality of that faring along in and out of the trail.

I sat down by the open window on a lovely summer morning and with a pad in my lap I began to write. The story caught my interest and held it until the sun was low. This was my first day's work.

## CHAPTER I

Of all the people that ever went west that expedition was the most remarkable.

A small boy in a big basket on the back of a jolly old man, who carried a cane in one hand, a rifle in the other; a black dog serving as scout, skirmisher and rear guard—that was the size of it. They were the survivors of a ruined home in the north of Vermont, and were traveling far toward the valley of the St. Lawrence in upper New York but with no particular destination.

Midsummer had passed them in their journey; their

clothes were covered with dust; their faces browning in the hot sun. It was a very small boy that sat inside the basket and clung to the rim, his tow head shaking as the old man walked. He saw wonderful things, day after day, looking down at the green fields or peering into the gloomy reaches of the wood; and he talked about them.

“Uncle Eb—is that where the swifts are?” he would ask often; and the old man would answer, “No; they ain’t real sassy this time o’ year. They lay ’round in the deep dingles every day.”

Then the small voice would sing idly or prattle with an imaginary being that had a habit of peeking over the edge of the basket or would shout a greeting to some bird or butterfly and ask finally:

“Tired, Uncle Eb?”

Sometimes the old gentleman would say “not very,” and keep on, looking thoughtfully at the ground. Then, again, he would stop and mop his bald head with a big red handkerchief and say, a little tremor of irritation in his voice: “Tired! who wouldn’t be tired with a big elephant like you on his back all day? I’d be ’shamed o’ myself t’ set there an’ let an old man carry me from Dan to Beersheba. Git out now an’ shake yer legs.”

I was the small boy and I remember it was always a great relief to get out of the basket, and having run ahead, to lie in the grass among the wild flowers, and jump up at him as he came along.

Uncle Eb had been working for my father five years before I was born. He was not a strong man and had never been able to carry the wide swath of the other help in the fields, but we all loved him for his kindness and his knack of story-telling. He was a bachelor who came over the mountain from Pleasant Valley, a little bundle of

clothes on his shoulder, and bringing a name that enriched the nomenclature of our neighborhood. It was Eben Holden.

He had a cheerful temper and an imagination that was a very wilderness of oddities. Bears and panthers growled and were very terrible in that strange country. He had invented an animal more treacherous than any in the woods, and he called it a swift. "Sumthin' like a panther," he described the look of it—a fearsome creature that lay in the edge of the woods at sundown and made a noise like a woman crying, to lure the unwary. It would light one's eye with fear to hear Uncle Eb lift his voice in the cry of the swift.

Many a time in the twilight when the bay of a hound or some far cry came faintly through the wooded hills, I have seen him lift his hand and bid us hark. And when we had listened a moment, our eyes wide with wonder, he would turn and say in a low, half whispered tone: "'S a swift." I suppose we needed more the fear of God, but the young children of the pioneer needed also the fear of the woods or they would have strayed to their death in them.

A big bass viol, taller than himself, had long been the solace of his Sundays. After he had shaved—a ceremony so solemn that it seemed a rite of his religion—that sacred viol was uncovered. He carried it sometimes to the back piazza and sometimes to the barn, where the horses shook and trembled at the roaring thunder of the strings. When he began playing we children had to get well out of the way, and keep our distance. I remember now the look of him, then—his thin face, his soft black eyes, his long nose, the suit of broadcloth, the stock and standing collar and, above all, the solemnity in his manner when that big devil of a thing was leaning on his breast.



As to his playing I have never heard a more fearful sound in any time of peace or one less creditable to a Christian. Week days he was addicted to the milder sin of the flute and, after chores, if there were no one to talk with him, he would sit long and pour his soul into that magic bar of boxwood.

Uncle Eb had another great accomplishment. He was what they call in the north country “a natural cooner.” After nightfall, when the corn was ripening, he spoke in a whisper and had his ear cocked for coons. But he loved all kinds of good fun.

So this man had a boy in his heart and a boy in his basket that evening we left the old house. My father and mother and older brother had been drowned in the lake, where they had gone for a day of pleasure. I had then a small understanding of my loss, but I have learned since that the farm was not worth the mortgage and that everything had to be sold.

Uncle Eb and I—a little lad, a very little lad of six—were all that was left of what had been in that home. Some were for sending me to the county house; but they decided, finally, to turn me over to a dissolute uncle, with some allowance for my keep. Therein Uncle Eb was to be reckoned with. He had set his heart on keeping me, but he was a farm hand without any home or visible property and not, therefore, in the mind of the authorities, a proper guardian. He had me with him in the old house, and the very night he heard they were coming after me in the morning, we started on our journey.

I remember he was a long time tying packages of bread and butter and tea and boiled eggs to the rim of the basket, so that they hung on the outside. Then he put a woollen shawl and an oilcloth blanket on its bottom, pulled the straps over his shoulders and buckled them,

standing before the looking-glass, and, having put on my cap and coat, stood me on the table, and stooped so that I could climb into the basket—a pack basket, that he had used in hunting, the top a little smaller than the bottom. Once in, I could stand comfortably or sit facing sideways, my back and knees wedged from port to starboard.

With me in my place he blew out the lantern and groped his way to the road, his cane in one hand, his rifle in the other. Fred, our old dog—a black shepherd, with tawny points—came after us. Uncle Eb scolded him and tried to send him back, but I plead for the poor creature and that settled it; he was one of our party.

“Dunno how we’ll feed him,” said Uncle Eb. “Our own mouths are big ’nough t’ take all we can carry, but I hain’ no heart t’ leave ’im all ’lone there.”

I was old for my age, they tell me, and had a serious look and a wise way of talking, for a boy so young; but I had no notion of what lay before or behind us.

“Now, boy, take a good look at the old house,” I remember he whispered to me at the gate that night. “Taint likely ye’ll ever see it ag’in. Keep quiet now,” he added, letting down the bars at the foot of the lane. “We’re goin’ west an’ we mustn’t let the grass grow under our feet. Got t’ be purty spry I can tell ye.”

It was quite dark and he felt his way carefully down the cow paths into the broad pasture. With every step I kept a sharp look-out for swifts, and the moon shone after awhile, making my work easier.

I had to hold my head down, presently, when the tall brush began to whip the basket and I heard the big boots of Uncle Eb ripping the briars. Then we came into the blackness of the thick timber and I could hear him feeling his way over the dead leaves with his cane. I got down, shortly, and walked beside him, holding on to the rifle

with one hand. We stumbled, often, and were long in the trail before we could see the moonlight through the tree columns. In the clearing I climbed to my seat again and, by and by, we came to the road where my companion sat down resting his load on a boulder.

“Pretty hot, Uncle Eb, pretty hot,” he said to himself, fanning his brow with that old felt hat he wore everywhere. “We’ve come three mile er more without a stop an’ I guess we’d better rest a jiffy.”

My legs ached and I was getting very sleepy. I remember the jolt of the basket as he rose, and hearing him say, “Well, Uncle Eb, I guess we’d better be goin’.”

Uncle Eb has told me since, that I tumbled out of the basket once, and that he had a time of it getting me in again, but I remember nothing more of that day’s history.

When I woke in the morning, I could hear the crackling of fire, and felt very warm and cozy wrapped in the big shawl. I got a cheery greeting from Uncle Eb, who was feeding the fire with a big heap of sticks that he had piled together. Old Fred was licking my hands with his rough tongue, and I suppose that is what waked me. Tea was steeping in the little pot that hung over the fire, and our breakfast of boiled eggs and bread and butter lay on a paper beside it. I remember well the scene of our little camp that morning. We had come to a strange country, and there was no road in sight. A wooded hill lay back of us, and, just before, ran a noisy little brook, winding between smooth banks, through a long pasture into a dense wood. Behind a wall on the opposite shore a great field of rustling corn filled a broad valley and stood higher than a man’s head.

While I went to wash my face in the clear water Uncle Eb was husking some ears of corn that he took out

of his pocket, and had them roasting over the fire in a moment. We ate heartily, giving Fred two big slices of bread and butter, packing up with enough remaining for another day. Breakfast over we doused the fire and Uncle Eb put on his basket. He made after a squirrel, presently, with old Fred, and brought him down out of a tree by hurling stones at him and then the faithful follower of our camp got a bit of meat for his breakfast. We climbed the wall, as he ate, and buried ourselves in the deep corn. The fragrant, silky tassels brushed my face and the corn hissed at our intrusion, crossing its green sabers in our path. Far in the field my companion heaped a little of the soft earth for a pillow, spread the oilcloth between rows and, as we lay down, drew the big shawl over us. Uncle Eb was tired after the toil of that night and went asleep almost as soon as he was down. Before I dropped off Fred came and licked my face and stepped over me, his tail wagging for leave, and curled upon the shawl at my feet. I could see no sky in that gloomy green aisle of corn.

This going to bed in the morning seemed a foolish business to me that day and I lay a long time looking up at the rustling canopy overhead. I remember listening to the waves that came whispering out of the further field, nearer and nearer, until they swept over us with a roaring swash of leaves, like that of water flooding among rocks, as I have heard it often. A twinge of homesickness came to me and the snoring of Uncle Eb gave me no comfort. I remember covering my head and crying softly as I thought of those who had gone away and whom I was to meet in a far country, called Heaven, whither we were going. I forgot my sorrow, finally, in sleep. When I awoke it had grown dusk under the corn. I felt for Uncle Eb and he was gone. Then I called to him.

“Hush, boy! lie low,” he whispered, bending over me, a sharp look in his eye. “’Fraid they’re after us.”

He sat kneeling beside me, holding Fred by the collar and listening. I could hear voices, the rustle of the corn and the tramp of feet near by. It was thundering in the distance—that heavy, shaking thunder that seems to take hold of the earth, and there were sounds in the corn like the drawing of sabers and the rush of many feet. The noisy thunder clouds came nearer and the voices that had made us tremble were no longer heard. Uncle Eb began to fasten the oil blanket to the stalks of corn for a shelter. The rain came roaring over us. The sound of it was like that of a host of cavalry coming at a gallop. We lay bracing the stalks, the blanket tied above us and were quite dry for a time. The rain rattled in the sounding sheaves and then came flooding down the steep gutters. Above us beam and rafter creaked, swaying, and showing glimpses of the dark sky. The rain passed—we could hear the last battalion leaving the field—and then the tumult ended as suddenly as it began. The corn trembled a few moments and hushed to a faint whisper. We could hear only the drip of rain drops leaking through the green roof. It was dark under the corn.

✓ ✓ ✓

There was my first day’s work.

It was near five o’clock. My wife came into the room.

“Aren’t you getting a little tired?” she asked.

“Come to think of it I guess I am,” was my answer.

“I want to hear what you’ve written.”

I read it to her. As I finished reading she came and kissed me. In her eyes was indisputable evidence that she had fallen in love with the boy and the old man. We sat down together. Neither of us spoke for a moment. Then

a curious kind of laughter fell upon us that ended with her saying: "It's lovely. Let's go out for a walk."

We did and so Eben Holden had begun his career.

The second day's work I like as well as anything I have written. Therefore I quote it here, omitting a few details not quite necessary to the purpose of this chapter.

1 1 1

He took a look at the sky after a while, and, remarking that he guessed they couldn't see his smoke now, began to kindle the fire. As it burned up he stuck two crotches and hung his tea pot on a stick that lay in them so it took the heat of the flame, as I had seen him do in the morning. Our grotto, in the corn, was shortly as cheerful as any room in a palace, and our fire sent its light into the long aisles that opened opposite, and nobody could see the warm glow of it but ourselves.

"We'll hev our supper," said Uncle Eb, as he opened a paper and spread out the eggs and bread and butter and crackers. "We'll jest hev our supper an' by 'n by when everyone's abed we'll make tracks in the dirt, I can tell ye."

Our supper over, Uncle Eb let me look at his tobacco-box—a shiny thing of German silver that always seemed to snap out a quick farewell to me before it dove into his pocket. He was very cheerful and communicative, and joked a good deal as we lay there waiting in the fire light. I got some further acquaintance with the swift, learning among other things that it had no appetite for the pure in heart.

"Why not?" I inquired.

"Well," said Uncle Eb, "it's like this: the meaner the boy, the sweeter the meat."

I went asleep after awhile in spite of all, right in the

middle of a story. The droning voice of Uncle Eb and the feel of his hand upon my forehead called me back, blinking, once or twice, but not for long. The fire was gone down to a few embers when Uncle Eb woke me and the grotto was lit only by a sprinkle of moonlight from above.

“Mos’ twelve o’clock,” he whispered. “Better be off.”

The basket was on his back and he was all ready. I followed him through the long aisle of corn, clinging to the tail of his coat. The golden lantern of the moon hung near the zenith and when we came out in the open we could see into the far fields. I climbed into my basket at the wall and as Uncle Eb carried me over the brook, stopping on a flat rock midway to take a drink, I could see the sky in the water, and it seemed as if a misstep would have tumbled me into the moon.

“Hear the crickets holler,” said Uncle Eb, as he followed the bank up into the open pasture.

“What makes ’em holler?” I asked.

“Oh, they’re jes’ filin’ their saws an’ thinkin’. Mebbe tellin’ o’ what’s happened ’em. Been a hard day fer them little folks.”

My eyes opened on a lovely scene at daylight. Uncle Eb had laid me on a mossy knoll in a bit of timber and through an opening right in front of us I could see a broad level of shining water, and the great green mountain on the further shore seemed to be up to its belly in the sea.

“Hello there!” said Uncle Eb; “here we are at Lake Champlain.”

I could hear the fire crackling and smell the odor of steeping tea.

“Ye flopped ’round like a fish in thet basket,” said Uncle Eb. “Guess ye must a been dreamin’ o’ bears. Jumped so ye scairt me. Didn’t know but I had a wil’ cat on my shoulders.”

Uncle Eb had taken a fish line out of his pocket and was tying it to a rude pole that he had cut and trimmed with his jack knife.

"I've found some crawfish here," he said, "an' I'm goin' t' try fer to git a bite on the p'int o' rocks there."

"Goin' t' git some fish, Uncle Eb?" I inquired.

"Wouldn't say't I was, er wouldn't say't I wasn't," he answered. "Jes goin' t' try."

Uncle Eb was always careful not to commit himself on a doubtful point. He had fixed his hook and sinker in a moment and then we went out on a rocky point near by and threw off into the deep water. Suddenly Uncle Eb gave a jerk that brought a groan out of him and then let his hook go down again, his hands trembling, his face severe.

"By mighty! Uncle Eb," he muttered to himself, "I thought we hed him thet time."

He jerked again presently, and then I could see a tug on the line that made me jump. A big fish came thrashing into the air in a minute. He tried to swing it ashore, but the pole bent and the fish got a fresh hold of the water and took the end of the pole under. Uncle Eb gave it a lift then that brought it ashore and a big slop of water with it. I remember how the fish slapped me with its wet tail and sprinkled my face shaking itself between my boots. It was a big bass and in a little while we had three of them. Uncle Eb dressed them and laid them over the fire on a gridiron of green birch, salting them as they cooked. I remember they went with a fine relish and the last of our eggs and bread and butter went with them.

Our breakfast over, Uncle Eb made me promise to stay with Fred and the basket while he went away to find a man who could row us across. In about an hour I heard a boat coming and the dog and I went out on the point



of rocks where we saw Uncle Eb and another man, heading for us, half over the cove. The bow bumped the rocks beneath us in a minute. Then the stranger dropped his oars and stood staring at me and the dog.

"Say, mister," said he presently, "can't go no further. There's a reward offered fer you an' thet boy."

Uncle Eb called him aside and was talking to him a long time.

I never knew what was said, but they came at last and took us into the boat and the stranger was very friendly.

When we had come near the landing on the "York State" side, I remember he gave us our bearings.

"Keep t' the woods," he said, "till you're out o' harm's way. Don't go near the stage road fer a while. Ye'll find a store a little way up the mountain. Git yer provisions there an' about eighty rod further on ye'll strike the trail. It'll take ye over the mountain north an' t' Paradise road. Then take the white church on yer right shoulder an' go straight west."

I would not have remembered it so well but for the fact that Uncle Eb wrote it all down in his account book and that has helped me over many a slippery place in my memory of those events. At the store we got some crackers and cheese, tea and coffee, dried beef and herring, a bit of honey and a loaf of bread that was sliced and buttered before it was done up. . . .

We hurried off on the trail and I remember Fred looked very crestfallen with two big packages tied to his collar. He delayed us a bit by trying to shake them off, but Uncle Eb gave him a sharp word or two and then he walked along very thoughtfully. . . .

In the deep woods he cut some boughs of hemlock, growing near us, and spread them in a little hollow. That

done, we covered them with the oilcloth, and sat down comfortably by the fire. Uncle Eb had a serious look and was not inclined to talk or story telling. Before turning in he asked me to kneel and say my prayer as I had done every evening at the feet of my mother. I remember, clearly, kneeling before my old companion and hearing the echo of my small voice there in the dark and lonely woods.

I remember too, and even more clearly, how he bent his head and covered his eyes in that brief moment. I had a great dread of darkness and imagined much evil of the forest, but somehow I had no fear if he were near me. When we had fixed the fire and lain down for the night on the fragrant hemlock and covered ourselves with the shawl, Uncle Eb lay on one side of me and old Fred on the other, so I felt secure indeed.

The night had many voices there in the deep wood. Away in the distance I could hear a strange, wild cry, and I asked what it was and Uncle Eb whispered back, "'s a loon." Down the side of the mountain a shrill bark rang in the timber and that was a fox, according to my patient oracle. Anon we heard the crash and thunder of a falling tree and a murmur that followed in the wake of the last echo. . . .

My ears had gone deaf with drowsiness when a quick stir in the body of Uncle Eb brought me back to my senses. He was up on his elbow listening and the firelight had sunk to a glimmer. Fred lay shivering and growling beside me. I could hear no other sound.

"Be still," said Uncle Eb, as he boxed the dog's ears. Then he rose and began to stir the fire and lay on more wood. As the flame leaped and threw its light into the tree tops a shrill cry, like the scream of a frightened woman, only louder and more terrible to hear, brought

me to my feet crying. I knew the source of it was near us and ran to Uncle Eb in a fearful panic.

“Hush, boy,” said he as it died away and went echoing in the far forest. “I’ll take care o’ you. Don’t be scairt. He’s more ’fraid uv us than we are o’ him. He’s makin’ off now.”

We heard then a great crackling of dead brush on the mountain above us. It grew fainter as we listened. In a little while the woods were silent.

“It’s the ol’ man o’ the woods,” said Uncle Eb. “He’s out takin’ a walk.”

“Will he hurt folks?” I inquired.

“Tow!” he answered, “jest as harmless as a kitten.”

1 1 1

[They got lost in the great forest and came upon some honey bees. Uncle Eb knew that they were probably from a clearing and used the art of the bee hunter in trailing them. The travelers soon came to a stretch of sown land.]

1 1 1

We could see a log house in the clearing, and we made for it as fast as our legs would carry us. We had a mighty thirst and when we came to a little brook in the meadow we lay down and drank and drank until we were fairly grunting with fullness. Then we filled our teapot and went on. Men were reaping with their cradles in a field of grain and, as we neared the log house, a woman came out in the dooryard and, lifting a big sea shell to her lips, blew a blast that rushed over the clearing and rang in the woods beyond it. A loud halloo came back from the men.

We must have presented an evil aspect, for our clothes were torn and we were both limping with fatigue.

The woman had a kindly face and, after looking at us a moment, came and stooped before me and held my small face in her hands turning it so she could look into my eyes.

"You poor little critter," said she, "where you goin'?"

Uncle Eb told her something about my father and mother being dead and our going west. Then she hugged and kissed me and made me very miserable, I remember, wetting my face with her tears, that were quite beyond my comprehension.

"Jethro," said she, as the men came into the yard. "I want ye t' look at this boy. Did ye ever see such a cunnin' little critter? Jes' look at them bright eyes!" and then she held me to her breast and nearly smothered me and began to hum a bit of an old song.

"Yer full o' mother love," said her husband, as he sat down on the grass a moment. "Lost her only baby, an' the good Lord has sent no other. I swan, he has got purty eyes. Jes' as blue as a May flower. Ain't ye hungry? Come right in, both o' ye, an' set down t' the table with us."

They made room for us and we sat down between the bare elbows of the hired men. I remember my eyes came only to the top of the table. So the good woman brought the family Bible and sitting on that firm foundation I ate my dinner of salt pork and potatoes and milk gravy—a diet as grateful as it was familiar to my taste.

"Orphan, eh?" said the man of the house, looking down at me.

"Orphan," Uncle Eb answered, nodding his head.

"God fearin' folks?"

"Best in the world," said Uncle Eb.

"Want t' bind 'im out?" the man asked.

"Couldn't spare 'im," said Uncle Eb, decisively.

"Where ye goin'?"

Uncle Eb hesitated, groping for an answer, I suppose, that would do no violence to our mutual understanding.

“Goin’ t’ heaven,” I ventured to say presently—an answer that gave rise to conflicting emotions at the table.

“That’s right,” said Uncle Eb, turning to me and patting my head. “We’re on the road t’ heaven, I hope, an’ ye’ll see it some day, sartin sure, if ye keep in the straight road and be a good boy.”

After dinner the good woman took off my clothes and put me in bed while she mended them. I went asleep then and did not awake for a long time. When I got up at last she brought a big basin of water and washed me with such motherly tenderness in voice and manner that I have never forgotten it. Uncle Eb lay sleeping on the lounge and when she had finished dressing me, Fred and I went out to play in the garden. It was supper time in a little while and then, again, the woman winded the shell and the men came up from the field. We sat down to eat with them, as we had done at noon, and Uncle Eb consented to spend the night after some urging. . . . One man told about the ghost of Burnt Bridge . . .

“What’s a ghost, Uncle Eb?” I whispered.

“Somethin’ like a swift,” he answered, “but not so powerful. We heard a panther las’ night,” he added, turning to our host. “Hollered like sin when he see the fire.”

“Scairt!” said the man o’ the house, gaping. “That’s what ailded him. I’ve lived twenty year on Paradise road an’ it was all woods when I put up the cabin. Seen deer on the doorstep an’ bears in the garden, an’ panthers in the fields. But I tell ye there’s no critter so terrible as a man. All the animals know ’im—how he roars, an’ spits fire an’ smoke an’ lead so it goes through a body er bites off a leg, mebbe. Guess they’d made friends with me but

them I didn't kill went away smarting with holes in 'em. An' I guess they told all their people 'bout *me*—the terrible critter that walked on its hind legs an' hed a white face an' drew up an' spit 'is teeth into their vitals 'cross a ten acre lot. An' purty soon they concluded they didn't want t' hev no truck with me. They thought this clearin' was the valley o' death an' they got awful cautious."

/ / /

My second day's work was finished. In all my life I have never known a better twenty minutes than those I spent reading this bit of copy to my wife. We both felt deeply the reality of these people of whom I had written and at last we knew that we had found our way. What it might mean to us we did not know but we were happier than we had ever been. The busy days that followed were filled with the joy of discovery. No doubt many a man would have done better with this big theme but my humble talent was at last finding adequate expression.

Soon I was offered the Sunday editorship of the *New York World* and my novel was put aside for more than a year. I offered the chapters written to *St. Nicholas* as the beginning of a serial. Its editor turned it down but accepted another and a rather inferior tale which I offered.

One morning more than a year later I had to smile when I met Mr. Gilder and Mr. Johnson, the distinguished editors of *Century Magazine*, on Seventeenth Street. That week *Eben Holden* had sold 105,000 copies. It was then probably the most popular book in the English-speaking world. Howells, Stedman, Mary Wilkins, John Hay, and other influential folk had generously recognized its truth as a picture of a time and a people.

Mr. Gilder said to me: "Why did you go to Boston for a publisher?"

I did not tell him. The truth would have done my friend, the editor of *St. Nicholas*, no good for Mr. Gilder also had charge of that magazine.

I was then writing *D’ri and I*, and soon Mr. Gilder bought the serial rights for the *Century*.

I am often asked which of my characters I like the best. I have thought much about it and I am inclined to answer:

“Old D’ri.”

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## 16. MY NEXT NOVEL

### *The Contract for Which Changed My Plan of Life*

BEFORE *Eben Holden* was quite finished, my editor, the late Elbridge S. Brooks, came to me in New York. He brought good news. He and the publishers were delighted with the book now nearing its end. He gave it extravagant praise. He wished me to make a contract for another book and offered a handsome advance on royalties.

"Yes," I said, "I have in mind a tale of the second war with the British full of stirring adventure. I think that it would have large sales. *Eben Holden* may not, for it is mostly a realistic chronicle of peaceful country life."

The contract was signed. My three months of leave from the *World* was in its last week. I had intended to go back to my desk where Mr. Pulitzer had said that I would be welcome. This new contract would have to end my newspaper career, and it did. New things were ahead of us, yet we were not overconfident.

I had bought a new typewriter and my wife had learned how to use it. She had been copying the work of each day as it came from my pen. Often she would come to me laughing at some saying of Uncle Eb or deeply moved by a bit of pathos—like the death of the old dog. It was apparent that the book was making a hit with her. That fact was a help and, I am tempted to say, an inspiration to me. The book came out in July. In the middle autumn the great avalanche of sales began. Charles Frohman bought the dramatic rights for a Broadway produc-



tion. A big company had made and was distributing bronze plaques, containing these last words of Eben Holden:

"I ain't afraid.  
'Shamed o' nuthin' I ever done.  
Alwuss kep' my tugs tight,  
Never swore 'less 'twas nec'sary,  
Never ketched a fish bigger'n 't was  
Er lied 'n a hoss trade  
Er shed a tear I did n't hev to.  
Never cheated anybody but Eben Holden.  
Goin' off somewheres, Bill—dunno the way nuther—  
Dunno 'f it's east er west er north er south,  
Er road er trail;  
But I ain't afraid."

I sat under the shade trees in the dooryard of my friend Judge Hale, in Canton, through a number of lovely summer days with a blank book in my lap and there wrote the opening chapters of *D'ri and I*. The work was interrupted by visits to the library of the House of Commons, in Ottawa, and that of the city of Ogdensburg for a bit of research.

I omit the introduction and a few details in presenting my first day's work on the story of

### "D'RI AND I"

After the war came hard times. My father had not prospered handsomely, when, near the end of the summer of 1803, he sold his stumpy farm, and we all started West, over rough trails and roadways. There were seven of us, bound for the valley of the St. Lawrence—my father and mother, my two sisters, my grandmother, D'ri, the hired man, and myself, then a sturdy boy of ten. We had an ox-team and -cart that carried our provision, the

sacred feather beds of my mother, the blankets and some few other things.

We drove with us the first flock of sheep that ever went West. There were forty of them, and they filled our days with trouble. But for our faithful dog Rover, I fear we should have lost heart and left them to the wolves. The cart had a low cover of canvas, and my mother and grandmother sat on the feather beds, and rode with small comfort even where the roads were level. My father let me carry my little pet rooster in a basket that hung from the cart-axle when not in my keeping. The rooster had a harder time than any of us, I fancy, for the days were hot and the roads rough. . . . He crowed triumphantly, at times, in the hot basket, even when he was being tumbled about on the swamp ways. Nights I always found a perch for him on the limb of a near tree, above the reach of predatory creatures. Every morning, as the dawn showed faintly in the tree-tops, he gave it a lusty cheer, flapping his wings with all the seeming of delight. Then, often, while the echo rang, I would open my eyes and watch the light grow in the dusky cavern of the woods.

Those sheep were like as many thorns in our flesh that day we made off in the deep woods from Lake Champlain. Travel was new to them, and what with tearing through thickets and running wild in every slash, they kept us jumping. When they were leg-weary and used to travel, they began to go quietly. We penned them at night with a long rope looped around a number of trees.

D'ri was an odd character. He had his own way of expressing the three degrees of wonder, admiration, and surprise. "Jerushy!"—accented on the second syllable—was the positive, "Jerushy Jane!" the comparative, and "Jerushy Jane Pepper!" the superlative. Who that poor lady might be I often wondered, but never ventured to

inquire. In times of stress I have heard him swear by "Judas Priest," but never more profanely. In his youth he had been a sailor on the lake, when some artist of the needle had tattooed a British jack on the back of his left hand—a thing he covered, of shame now, when he thought of it. His right hand had lost its forefinger in a sawmill. His rifle was distinguished by the name of Beeswax,—“Ol’ Beeswax” he called it sometimes,—for no better reason than that it was “easy spoke an’ hed a kind uv a powerful soun’ tew it.” He had a nose like a shoemaker’s thumb: there was a deep incurve from its wide tip to his forehead. He had a large, gray, inquiring eye and the watchful habit of the woodsman. Somewhere in the midst of a story he would pause and peer thoughtfully into the distance, meanwhile feeling the pipe-stem with his lips, and then resume the narrative as suddenly as he had stopped. He was a lank and powerful man, six feet tall in his stockings. He wore a thin beard that had the appearance of parched grass on his ruddy countenance. In the matter of hair, nature had treated him with a generosity most unusual. His heavy shock was sheared off square above his neck.

That evening, as he lay on his elbow in the firelight, D’ri had just entered the eventful field of reminiscence. The women were washing the dishes; my father had gone to the spring for water. D’ri pulled up suddenly, lifted his hat of faded felt, and listened, peering into the dusk.

“Seems t’ me them wolves is comin’ nearer,” he said thoughtfully.

Their cries were echoing in the far timber. We all rose and listened. In a moment my father came hurrying back with his pail of water.

“D’ri,” said he, quietly, as he threw some wood on the fire, “they smell mutton. Mek the guns ready. We

may git a few pelts. There's a big bounty on 'em here in York State."

We all stood about the fire listening as the wolves came nearer.

"It's the sheep thet brings 'em," said my father.

"Quite a consid'able number on 'em, tew," said D'ri, as he stood cleaning the bore of his rifle.

My young sisters began to cry.

"Needn't be scairt," said father. "They won't come very near."

"Tow-w-w!" said D'ri, with a laugh. "They'll be apt t' stub ther toes 'fore they git very nigh us."

This did not quite agree with the tales he had previously been telling. I went for my sword, and buckled its belt about me, the scabbard hanging to my heels. Presently some creature came bounding over the brush. I saw him break through the wall of darkness and stop quickly in the firelight. Then D'ri brought him down with his rifle. It was a deer.

"Started him up back there 'n the woods a few mild," said D'ri. "He was mekin' fer this 'ere pond—thet's what he was dewin'."

"What for?" I inquired.

"'Cause fer the reason why he knowed he wouldn't mek no tracks 'n the water, ner no scent," said D'ri, with some show of contempt for my ignorance.

The deer lay floundering in the briars some fifty feet away. My father ran with his knife and put him quickly out of misery. Then we hauled the carcass to clear ground.

"Let it lie where 'tis fer now," said he, as we came back to the fire. Then he got our two big traps out of the cart and set them beside the carcass and covered them with leaves. The howling of the wolves had ceased. I

could hear only the creaking of a dead limb high above us, and the bellow of frogs in the near pond. We had fastened the trap chains and were coming back to the fire, when the dog rose, barking fiercely; then we heard the crack of D'ri's rifle.

"More'n fifty wolves eroun' here," he whispered as we ran up to him. "Never see sech a snag on 'em."

The sheep were stirring nervously. Near the pen a wolf lay kicking where D'ri had dropped him.

"Rest on 'em snooked off when the gun hollered," he went on, whispering as before.

My mother and grandmother sat with my sisters in the cart, hushing their murmurs of fear. Early in the evening I had tied Rover to the cart-wheel, where he was growling hotly, impatient of the leash.

"See?" said D'ri, pointing with his finger. "See 'em?—there'n the dark by thet air big hemlock."

We could make out a dim stir in the shadows where he pointed. Presently we heard the spring and rattle of a trap. As we turned that way, the other trap took hold hard; as it sprang, we could hear a wolf yelp.

"Meks 'em holler," said D'ri, "thet ol' he-trap does, when it teks holt. Stay here by the sheep, 'n' I'll go over 'n' give 'em somethin' fer spraint ankles."

Other wolves were swarming over the dead deer, and the two in the traps were snarling and snapping at them. My father and D'ri fired at the bunch, killing one of the captives and another—the largest wolf I ever saw. The pack had slunk away as they heard the rifles. Our remaining captive struggled to get free, but in a moment D'ri had brained him with an axe. He and my father reset our traps and hauled the dead wolves into the firelight. There they began to skin them, for the bounty was ten dollars for each in the new towns—a sum that made our adven-

ture profitable. I built fires on the farther side of the sheep, and, as they brightened, I could see, here and there, the gleaming eyes of a wolf in the darkness. I was up all night heaping wood upon the fires, while D'ri and my father skinned the wolves and dressed the deer. I remember, as they worked, D'ri calmed himself with the low-sung, familiar music of:—

Li too rul I oorul I oorul I ay.

They had just finished when the cock crew.

"Holler, ye gol-dum little cuss!" D'ri shouted as he went over to him. "Can't no snookin' wolf crack our bones fer *us*. Peeled 'em—thet's what we done tew 'em! Judas Priest! He can peck a man's finger some, can't he?"

The light was coming, and he went off to the spring for water, while I brought the spider and pots. The great, green-roofed temple of the woods, that had so lately rung with the howl of wolves, began to fill with far wandering echoes of sweet song.

We were off at sunrise, on a road that grew rougher every mile. At noon we came to a river so swollen as to make a dangerous ford. After dinner my father waded in, going hips under where the water was deep and swift. Then he cut a long pole and took my mother on his shoulders and entered the broad stream, steadying himself with the pole. When she had got down safe on the other side, he came back for grandmother and my sisters, and took them over in the same way. D'ri, meanwhile, bound up the feather beds and carried them on his head, leaving the dog and me to tend the sheep. All our blankets and clothing were carried across in the same manner. Then I mounted the cart, with my rooster, lashing the oxen till they took to the stream. They had tied the bell-wether to

the axle, and, as I started, men and dog drove the sheep after me. The oxen wallowed in the deep water, and our sheep, after some hesitation, began to swim. The big cart floated like a raft part of the way, and we landed with no great difficulty. Farther on, the road became nothing better than a rude trail, where, frequently, we had to stop and chop through heavy logs and roll them away.

. . . The fourth day after we left Chateaugay my grandmother fell ill and died suddenly there in the deep woods. We were far from any village, and sorrow slowed our steps. We pushed on, coming soon to a sawmill and a small settlement. They told us there was neither minister nor undertaker within forty miles. My father and D'ri made the coffin of planed lumber, and lined it with deer-skin, and dug the grave on top of a high hill. When all was ready, my father, who had always been much given to profanity, albeit I know he was a kindly and honest man with no irreverence in his heart, called D'ri aside.

"D'ri," said he, "ye've alwus been more properspoke than I hev. Say a word o' prayer?"

"Don't much b'lieve I could," said he, thoughtfully. "I hev been t' meetin', but I hain't never been no great hand fer prayin'."

"'Twouldn't sound right nohow fer me t' pray," said my father, "I got s' kind o' rough when I was in the army."

"'Fraid it'll come a leetle unhandy fer me," said D'ri, with a look of embarrassment, "but I don't never shirk a tough job ef it hes t' be done."

Then he stepped forward, took off his faded hat, his brow wrinkling deep, and said, in a kind of preacher tone: "O God, tek care o' gran'ma. Help us t' go on careful, an' when we're riled, help us t' keep er mouths shet.

O God, help the ol' cart, an' the ex in pertic'lar. An' don't be noway hard on us. Amen."

1 1 1

I think that the most novel and striking adventures in the book are that of the troop of British cavalry in the dooryard of the hornet fancier, that in the slide of the avengers in Upper Canada, and that in the thrilling battle of Lake Erie.

The sales were for a time rather disappointing. Evidently the crowd wanted from me another story of placid country life and quaint character. *D'ri* was proclaimed as another Leatherstocking and soon John Hay publicly endorsed him, and large sales began. The book was not so eagerly taken as *Eben Holden* but the sales went beyond 200,000 in about a year. It has been going out to the public for many years. Yet it has never shown the vitality of *Eben Holden*, which sells about a thousand a year even now thirty-eight years after publication.

I went away to visit Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Carnegie in Scotland immediately after *D'ri* was written, asking the publishers to see that certain eighteenth century French words be approved or changed by competent authority. Nothing was done about it and some changes were made in the plates after my return.



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## 17. FIRST DRAFT OF "KEEPING UP WITH LIZZIE"

ONE big thing in my time was the coming of the automobile. Its social effect was astonishing, for it started an era of extravagance without precedent in the history of America. It put fresh vigor into the old art of keeping up that achieved its highest speed just before the great debacle in 1929. I made a careful and profitable study of this remarkable race. Here in a small compass is—next to the World War—the most interesting drama of my time, because almost every family had a part in it. Keeping up was, and still is, a universal habit.

The phrase was taken up by the comic sheets and the Ford car was soon called a "tin Lizzie."

This is the form in which keeping up first drifted to my beach. George Duneka, the literary manager of Harper and Brothers told me that no short story printed by the *Monthly* in his time had brought so many letters from its readers. George Fitch hailed it as the best short story of his time. It dramatizes that great change in the spirit of America that came with the automobile.

### KEEPING UP WITH LIZZIE

The Honorable Socrates Potter was the only "scientific man" in the village of Fairview, Connecticut. In every point of manhood he was far ahead of his neighbors. In a way he had outstripped himself, for, while his ideas were highly modern, he clung to the dress and manners that prevailed in his youth. He wore broadcloth

every day and a white choker, and chewed tobacco, and never permitted his work to interfere with the even tenor of his conversation. He loved the old times and fashions, and had a drawling tongue and often spoke in the dialect of his fathers, loving the sound of it. His satirical moods were sure to be flavored with clipped words and changed tenses. The stranger often took him for a "hayseed," but on further acquaintance opened his mouth in astonishment, for Soc. Potter, as many called him, was a man of insight and learning and a quality of wit herein revealed. He was at times an engineer, an attorney and counsellor, and always a philosopher. He had an office over the store of Samuel Henshaw, and made a specialty of deeds, titles, epigrams, and witticisms.

He sat with his feet on his desk and his mind on the subject of extravagance. When he was doing business he sat like other men, but when his thought assumed a degree of elevation his feet rose with it. He began his story by explaining that it was all true but the names.

"This is the balloon age," said he, with a merry twinkle in his gray eyes. "The inventor has led us into the skies. The odor of gasoline is in the path of the eagle. Our thoughts are between earth and heaven; our prices have followed our aspirations in the upward flight. Now here is Sam Henshaw. Sam? Why, he's a merchant prince o' Fairview—grocery business—had a girl—name o' Lizzie—smart and as purty as a wax doll. Dan Pettigrew, the noblest flower o' the young manhood o' Fairview, fell in love with her. No wonder. We were all fond o' Lizzie. They were a han'some couple, an' together about half the time.

"Well, Sam began to aspire, an' nothin' would do for Lizzie but Miss Parmly's school at Hardcastle at seven hundred dollars a year. So they rigged her up splendid, an'

away she went. From that day she set the pace for this community. Dan had to keep up with Lizzie, and so his father, Bill Pettigrew, sent him to Harvard. Other girls started in the race, an' the first we knew there was a big field in this maiden handicap.

"Well, Sam had been aspirin' for about three months, when he began to perspire. The extras up at Hardcastle had exceeded his expectations. He was goin' a hot pace to keep up with Lizzie, an' it looked as if his morals was meltin' away.

"I was in the northern part o' the county one day, an' saw some wonderful, big, red, tasty apples.

"'What ye doin' with yer apples?' says I to the grower.

"'I've sent the most of 'em to Samuel Henshaw, o' Fairview, an' he's sold 'em on commission,' says he.

"'What do you get for 'em?' I asked.

"'Two dollars an' ten cents a barrel,' says he.

"The next time I went into Sam's store there were the same red apples that came out o' that orchard in the northern part o' the county.

"'How much are these apples?' I says.

"'Seven dollars a barrel,' says Sam.

"'Sam, ye're wastin' yer talents,' I says. 'You'd have a better chance in Wall Street.'

"Sam was kind o' shamefaced.

"'It costs so much to live I have to make a big profit somewhere,' says he. 'If you had a daughter to educate, you'd know the reason.'

"I bought a bill o' goods, an' noticed that ham an' butter were up two cents a pound an' flour four cents a sack an' other things in proportion. I didn't say a word, but I see that Sam proposed to tax the community for the education o' that Lizzie girl. Folks began to complain, but

the tax on each wasn't heavy, an' a good many people owed Sam an' wasn't in shape to quit him. Then Sam had the best store in the village, an' everybody was kind o' proud of it. So we stood this assessment o' Sam's, an' by a general tax paid for the education o' Lizzie. She made friends an' sailed around in automobiles an' spent a part o' the Christmas holidays with the daughter o' Mr. Beverly Gottrich on Fifth Avenue, an' young Beverly Gott-rich brought her home in his big, red runabout. Oh, that was a great day in Fairview!—that red runabout day of our history when the pitcher was broken at the fountain and they that looked out of the windows trembled.

"Dan Pettigrew was home from Harvard for the holidays, an' he an' Lizzie met at a church party. They held their heads very high, an' seemed to despise each other an' everybody else. Word went around that it was all off between 'em. It seems that they had riz-not risen, but riz-far above each other.

"Now it often happens that when the young ascend the tower o' their aspirations an' look down upon the earth its average inhabitant seems no larger to them than a red ant. Sometimes there's nobody in sight—that is, no real body—nothin' but clouds an' rainbows an' kings and queens an' their families. Now Lizzie an' Dan were both up in their towers an' lookin' down, an' that was probably the reason they didn't see each other.

"Right away a war began between the rival houses o' Henshaw an' Pettigrew. The first we knew Sam was buildin' a new house with a tower on it an' hardwood finish inside an' half an acre in the dooryard. The tower was for Lizzie. It signalized her rise in the community. It put her one flight above anybody in Fairview.

"As the house rose, up went Sam's prices again. I went over to the store an' bought a week's provisions, an'

when I got the bill I see that he'd taxed me twenty-nine cents for his improvements.

"I met one o' my friends, an' I says to him, 'Wal,' I says, 'Sam is goin' to make us pay for his new house an' lot. Sam's ham is up two cents a pound, an' bacon, butter, an' flour in proportion.'

"'Wal, what do ye expect?' says he. 'Lizzie is in high society, an' he's got to keep up with her. Lizzie must have a home proper to one o' her station. Don't be hard on Sam.'

"'I ain't,' I says. 'But Sam's house ought to be proper to his station instead o' hers.'

"I had just sat down in my office when Bill Pettigrew came in—Sam's great rival in the grocery an' aspiration business. He'd bought a new automobile, an' wanted me to draw a mortgage on his house an' lot for two thousand dollars.

"'You'd better go slow,' I says. 'It looks like bad business to mortgage your home for an automobile.'

"'It's for the benefit o' my customers,' says he.

"'Something purty for 'em to look at?' I asked.

"'It will quicken deliveries,' says he.

"'You can't afford it,' I says.

"'Yes, I can,' says he. 'I've put up prices twenty per cent., an' it ain't a-goin' to bother me to pay for it.'

"'Oh, then your customers are goin' to pay for it!' I says, 'an' you're only a guarantor.'

"'I wouldn't put it that way,' says he. 'It costs more to live these days. Everything is goin' up.'

"'Includin' taxes,' I said to Bill, an' went to work an' drew his mortgage for him, an' he got his automobile.

"I'd intended to take my trade to his store, but when I saw that he planned to tax the community for his luxuries I changed my mind and went over to Eph Hill's.

He kept the only other decent grocery-store in the village. His prices were just about on a level with the others.

"'How do you explain it that prices have gone up so?'" I asked.

"'Why, they say it's due to an overproduction o' gold,' says he.

"'Looks to me like an overproduction of argument,' I says. 'The old Earth keeps shellin' out more gold ev'ry year, an' the more she takes out o' her pockets the more I have to take out o' mine.'

"'Wal, o' course I had to keep in line, so I put up the prices o' my work a little to be in fashion. Everybody kicked good an' plenty, an' nobody worse'n Sam an' Bill an' Ephraim, but I told 'em how I'd read that there was so much gold in the world it kind o' set me hankerin'.'

"'Ye know I had ten acres o' wornout land in the edge o' the village, an' while others bought automobiles an' such luxuries I invested in fertilizers an' hired a young man out of an agricultural school an' went to farmin'. Within a year I was raisin' all the meat an' milk an' vegetables that I needed, an' sellin' as much ag'in to my neighbors.

"'Well, Fairview under Lizzie was like Rome under Theodora. The immorals o' the people thrive an' grew. As prices went up decency went down, an' wisdom rose in value like meat an' flour. Seemed so everybody that had a dollar in the bank an' some that didn't bought automobiles. They kept me busy drawin' contracts an' deeds an' mortgages an' surveyin' land an' searchin' titles, an' o' course I prospered. More than half the population converted property into cash an' cash into automobiles, piano-players, foreign tours, vocal music, modern languages, an' other forms of aspiration. They were puttin' it on each other. Every man had a deep scheme for makin' the other

feller pay for his fun. Reminds me o’ that verse from Zechariah, ‘I will show them no mercy, saith the Lord, but I will deliver every man into the hand of his neighbor.’ Now the baron business has generally been lucrative, but here in Fairview there was too much competition. We were all barons. Everybody was taxin’ everybody else for his luxuries, an’ nobody could save a cent—nobody but me an’ Eph Hill. He didn’t buy any automobile or build a new house or send his girl to the seminary. He kept both feet on the ground, but he put up his prices along with the rest. By an’ by Eph had a mortgage on about half the houses in the village. That showed what was the matter with the other men.

“The merchants all got liver-complaint. There were twenty men that I used to see walkin’ home to their dinner every day or down to the post-office every evenin’. But they didn’t walk any more. They scud along in their automobiles at twenty miles an hour, with the whole family around ’em. They looked as if they thought that now, at last, they were keepin’ up with Lizzie. Their homes were empty most o’ the time. The reading-lamp was never lighted. There was no season of social converse. Every merchant but Eph Hill grew fat an’ round, an’ complained of indigestion an’ sick-headache. Sam looked like a moored balloon. Seemed so their morals grew fat an’ flabby an’ shif’less an’ in need of exercise. Their morals travelled too, but they travelled from mouth to mouth, as ye might say, an’ very fast. More’n half of ’em give up church an’ went off on the country roads every Sunday. All along the pike from Fairview to Jerusalem Corners ye could see where they’d laid humbly on their backs in the dust, prayin’ to a new god an’ tryin’ to soften his heart with oil or open the gates o’ mercy with a monkey-wrench.

"Bill came into my shop one day an' looked as if he hadn't a friend in the world. He wanted to borrow some money.

"'Money!' I says. 'What makes ye think I've got money?'

"'Because ye ain't got any automobile,' he says, laughin'.

"'No,' I says. 'You bought one, an' that was all I could afford.'

"'He didn't git my p'int, an' went on: 'You're one o' the few sensible men in this village. You live within yer means, an' you ought to have money if ye ain't.'

"'I've got a little, but I don't see why you should have it,' I says. 'You want me to do all the savin' for both of us.'

"'It costs so much to live I can't save a cent,' he says. 'You know I've got a boy in college, an' it costs fearful. I told my boy the other day how I worked my way through school an' lived on a dollar a week in a little room an' did my own washin'. He says to me, "Well, Governor, you fergit that I have a social position to maintain."' "

"'He's right,' I says. 'You can't expect him to belong to the 'varsity crew an' the Dickey an' the Hasty-Pudding Club an' dress an' behave like the son of an ordinary grocer in Fairview, Connecticut. Ye can't live on nuts an' raisins an' be decent in such a position. Looks to me as if it would require the combined incomes o' the grocer an' his lawyer to maintain it. His position is likely to be hard on your disposition. He's tryin' to keep up with Lizzie—that's what's the matter.'

"For a moment Bill looked like a lost dog. I told him how Grant an' Thomas stood on a hilltop one day an' seen their men bein' mowed down like grass, an' by an' by



Thomas says to Grant, 'Wal, General, we'll have to move back a little; it's too hot for the boys here.'

"'I'm 'fraid your boy's position is kind of uncomfortable,' I says.

"'I'll win out,' he says. 'My boy will marry an' settle down in a year or so, then he'll begin to help me.'

"'But you may be killed off before then,' I says.

"'If my friends'll stand by me I'll pull through,' says he.

"'But your friends have their own families to stand by,' I says.

"'Look here, Mr. Potter,' says he. 'You've no such expense as I have. You're able to help me, an' you ought to. I've got a note comin' due tomorrow an' no money to pay it with.'

"'Retrench,' I says. 'Cut down your expenses an' your prices.'

"'Can't,' says he. 'It costs too much to live. What'll I do?'

"'You ought to die,' I says, very mad.

"'I can't.'

"'Why not?'

"'It costs so much to die. Why, it takes a thousand dollars to give a man a decent funeral these days.'

"'Wal,' I says, 'every man has to prepare for his own funeral. You've taxed the community for yer luxuries, an' now ye want to tax me for yer notes. It's unjust discrimination. It gives me a kind of a lonsome feelin'. You tell Dan to come an' see me. He needs advice more than you need money, an' I've got a full line of it.'

"Bill went away richer by a check for a hundred dollars. Oh, I always know when I'm losin' money! I'm not like other citizens o' Fairview.

"Dan came to see me the next Saturday night. He

was a big, blue-eyed, handsome, good-natured boy, an' dressed like the son of a millionaire. I brought him here to the office, an' he sat down beside me.

" 'Dan,' I says, 'what are your plans for the future?'

" 'I mean to be a lawyer,' says he.

" 'Quit it,' I says.

" 'Why?'

" 'There are too many lawyers. We don't need any more. They're devourin' our substance.'

" 'What do you suggest?'

" 'Be a real man. We're on the verge of a social revolution. Boys have been leavin' the farms an' goin' into the cities to be grand folks. The result is we have too many grand folks an' too few real folks. The tide has turned. Get aboard.'

" 'I don't understand you.'

" 'America needs wheat an' corn more than it needs arguments an' theories.'

" 'Would you have me be a farmer?' he asked, in surprise.

" 'A farmer!' I says. 'It's a new business—an exact science these days. Think o' the high prices an' the cheap land with its productiveness more than doubled by modern methods. The country is longin' for big, brainy men to work its idle land. Soon we shall not produce enough for our own needs.'

" 'But I'm too well educated to be a farmer,' says he.

" 'Pardon me,' I says. 'The land'll soak up all the education you've got an' yell for more. Its great need is education. We've been sendin' the smart boys to the city an' keepin' the fools on the farm. We've put everything on the farm but brains. That's what's the matter with the farm.'

" 'But farming isn't dignified,' says Dan.

"'Pardon me ag'in,' says I. 'It's more dignified to search for the secrets o' God in the soil than to grope for the secrets o' Satan in a lawsuit. Any fool can learn Blackstone an' Kent an' Greenleaf, but the book o' law that's writ in the soil is only for keen eyes.'

"'I want a business that fits a gentleman,' says Dan.

"'An' the future farmer can be as much a gentleman as God'll let him.'

"'How shall I go about it?' he says, half convinced.

"'First stop tryin' to keep up with Lizzie,' says I. 'The way to beat Lizzie is to go toward the other end o' the road. Ye see, you've dragged yer father into the race, an' he's about winded. Turn around an' let Lizzie try to keep up with you. Second, change yer base. Go to a school of agriculture an' learn the business just as you'd go to a school o' law or medicine. Begin modest. Live within yer means. If you do right I'll buy you all the land ye want an' start ye goin'.'

"'When he left I knew that I'd won my case. In a week or so he sent me a letter sayin' that he'd decided to take my advice.

"'He came to see me often after that. The first we knew he was going with Marie Benson. Marie had a reputation for good sense, but right away she began to take after Lizzie, an' struck a tolerably good pace. Went to New York to study music an' perfect herself in French. If one has the money to do it, why, it's a good thing to do but Marie's father was like the other fathers in hot water half the time.

"'I declare it seemed as if about every girl in the village was tryin' to be a kind of a princess with a full-jewelled brain. Not one in ten was willin', if she knew how, to sweep a floor or cook a square meal. Their souls were above it. Their feet were in Fairview an' their heads

in Dreamland. They talked o' the doin's o' the Four Hundred an' the successes o' Lizzie. They trilled an' warbled; they pounded the family piano; they golfed an' motored an' whisted; they engaged in the titivation of toy dogs an' the cultivation o' general debility; they ate caramels an' chocolates enough to fill up a well; they complained; they dreamed o' sunbursts an' tiaras while their papas worried about notes an' bills; they lay on downy beds of ease with the last best-seller, an' followed the fortunes of the bold youth until he found his treasure at last in the unhidden chest of the heroine; they created what we are pleased to call the servant problem, which is really the drone problem, caused by the added number who toil not, but have to be toiled for; they grew in fat an' folly, but not in grace an' wisdom. Some were both ox-eyed an' peroxide. They studied the beauty columns.

"Now the organs of the human body are just as shiftless as the one that owns them. The systems o' these fair ladies couldn't do their own work. The physician an' the surgeon were added to the list o' their servants, an' became as necessary as the cook an' the chambermaid. But they were keepin' up with Lizzie. Poor things! They weren't so much to blame. They thought their fathers were rich, an' their fathers enjoyed an' clung to that reputation. They hid their poverty an' flaunted the flag of opulence.

"It costs money, big money an' more, to produce a generation of invalids. The papas o' Fairview had paid for it with sweat an' toil an' broken health an' borrowed money an' the usual tax added to the price o' their goods or their labor. Suddenly one night the cashier o' the First National Bank blew out his brains. We found that he had stolen eighteen thousand dollars in the effort to keep up. That was a lesson to the Lizzie-chasers! Why, sir, we found that each of his girls had a diamond ring an' could

sing in three languages, an' the boy was in Yale College. Poor man! he didn't steal for his own pleasure. Everything went at auction—house, grounds, rings, automobile. Another man was caught sellin' under weight with fixed scales, an' went to prison. Henry Brown failed, an' we found that he had borrowed five hundred dollars from John Bass, an' at the same time John Bass had borrowed six hundred from Tom Rogers, an' Rogers had borrowed seven hundred an' fifty from Sam Henshaw, an' Henshaw had borrowed the same amount from Percival Smith, an' Smith had got it from me. The chain broke, the note structure fell like a house o' cards, an' I was the only loser—think o' that. There were five capitalists an' only one man with real money.

"Sam Henshaw's girl had graduated an' gone abroad with her mother. One Sunday 'bout a year later, Sam flew up to the door o' my house in his automobile. He lit on the sidewalk an' struggled up the steps with two hundred an' forty-seven pounds o' meat on him. He walked like a man carryin' a barrel o' pork. He acted as if he was glad to see me an' the big armchair on the piazz'.

"'What's the news?' I asked.

"'Lizzie an' her mother got back this mornin',' he gasped. 'They've been six months in Europe. Lizzie is in love with it. She's hobnobbed with kings an' queens. She talks art beautiful. I wish you'd come over an' hear her hold a conversation. It's wonderful. She's goin' to be a great addition to this community. She's got me faded an' on the run. I ran down to the store for a few minutes this mornin', an' when I got back she says to me:

"'“Father, you always smell o' ham an' mustard. Have you been in that disgusting store? Go an' take a bahth at once.” Talks just like the English people—she's

been among 'em so long. Get into my car an' I'll take ye over an' fetch ye back.'

"Sam regarded his humiliation with pride an' joy. At last Lizzie had convinced him that her education had paid. My curiosity was excited. I got in an' we flew over to Sam's. Sam yelled up the stairway kind o' joyful as we come in, an' his wife answered at the top o' the stairs an' says:

"'Mr. Henshaw, I wish you wouldn't shout in this house like a boy calling cows.'

"I guess she didn't know I was there. She ran upstairs an' back, an' then we turned into that splendid parlor o' his an' set down. Purty soon Liz an' her mother swung in an' smiled very pleasant an' shook hands an' asked how was my family, etc., an' went right on talkin'. I saw they didn't ask for the purpose of getting information. Liz was dressed to kill an' purty as a picture—cheeks red as a rooster's comb an' waist like a hornet's. The cover was off her showcase, an' there was a diamond sunburst in the middle of it, an' the jewels were surrounded by charms to which I am not wholly insensible even now.

"'I wanted ye to tell Mr. Potter about yer travels,' says Sam.

"Lizzie smiled an' looked out o' the window a minute an' fetched a sigh an' struck out, lookin' like Deacon Bristow the day he give ten dollars to the church. She told about the cities an' the folks an' the weather in that queer, English way she had o' talkin'.

"'Tell how ye hobnobbed with the Queen o' Italy,' Sam says.

"'Oh, father! Hobnobbed!' says she. 'Anybody would think that she and I had manicured each other's hands. She only spoke a few words in Italian and looked very gracious an' beautiful an' complimented my color.'

"Then she lay back in her chair, kind o' weary, an' Sam asked me how was business—just to fill in the gap, I guess. Liz woke up an' showed how far she'd got ahead in the race.

"'Business!' says she, with animation. 'That's why I haven't any patience with American men. They never sit down for ten minutes without talking business. Their souls are steeped in commercialism. Don't you see how absurd it is, father? There are plenty of lovely things to talk about.'

"Sam looked guilty, an' I felt sorry for him. It had cost heavy to educate his girl up to a p'int where she could give him so much advice an' information. He didn't say a word. He bowed his head before this pretty, perfumed casket of erudition.

"'You like Europe,' I says.

"'I love it,' she says. 'It's the only place to live. There one finds so much of the beautiful in art and music and so many cultivated people.'

"Lizzie was a handsome girl, an' had more sense than any o' the others that tried to keep up with her. After all, she was Sam's fault, an' Sam was a sin conceived an' committed by his wife, as ye might say. She had made him what he was.

"'Have you seen Dan Pettigrew lately?' Lizzie asked.

"'Yes,' I says. 'Dan is goin' to be a farmer.'

"'A farmer!' says she, an' covered her face with her handkerchief an' shook with merriment.

"'Yes,' I says. 'Dan has come down out o' the air. He's abandoned folly. He wants to do something to help along.'

"'Yes, of course,' says Lizzie, in a lofty manner. 'Dan is really an excellent boy—isn't he?'

"'Yes, an' he's livin' within his means—that's the

first mile-stone in the road to success,' I says. 'I'm goin' to buy him a thousand acres o' land, an' one o' these days he'll own it an' as much more. You wait. He'll have a hundred men in his employ, an' flocks an' herds an' a market of his own in New York. He'll control prices in this county, an' they're goin' down. He'll be a force in the State.'

"They were all sitting up. The faces o' the Lady Henshaw and her daughter turned red.

" 'I'm very glad to hear it, I'm sure,' said her Ladyship.

" 'I wasn't so sure o' that as she was, an' there, for me, was the milk in the cocoanut. I was joyful.

" 'Why, it's perfectly lovely!' says Lizzie, as she fetched her pretty hands together in her lap.

" 'Yes, you want to cultivate Dan,' I says. 'He's a man to be reckoned with.'

" 'Oh, indeed!' says her Ladyship.

" 'Yes, indeed!' I says, 'an' the girls are all after him.'

" 'I just guessed that. I knew it was unscrupulous, but livin' here in this atmosphere does affect the morals even of a lawyer. Lizzie grew red in the face.

" 'He could marry one o' the Four Hundred if he wanted to,' I says. 'The other evening he was seen in the big red touring-car of the Van Alstynes. What do you think o' that?'

" 'Now that was true, but the chauffeur had been a college friend o' Dan's, an' I didn't mention that.

" 'The Lady Henshaw rose with her chin in the air an' strode out o' the room. She'd had enough. Lizzie had a dreamy smile in her face.

" 'Why, it's wonderful!' says she. 'I didn't know he'd improved so.'

" 'I thought I'd gone far enough an' drew out o' the



game. Lizzie looked confident. She seemed to have something up her sleeve besides that lovely arm o' hers.

"I went home, an' two days later Sam looked me up again. Then the secret came out o' the bag. He'd heard that I had some money in the savings-banks over at Bridgeport payin' me only three and a half per cent., an' he wanted to borrow it an' pay me six per cent. His generosity surprised me. It was not like Sam.

"'What's the matter with you?' I asked. 'Is it possible that your profits have all gone into gasoline an' rubber an' silk an' education an' hardwood finish an' human fat?'

"'Well, it costs so much to live,' he says, 'an' the wholesalers have kept liftin' the prices on me. Now there's the meat trust—their prices are up thirty-five per cent.'

"'Of course,' I says, 'the directors have to have their luxuries. You taxed us for your new house an' yer automobile an' yer daughter's education, an' they're taxin' you for their steam-yachts an' private cars an' racin' stables. You can't expect to do all the taxin'.'

"'I'll come out all right,' he says. 'I'm goin' to raise my whole schedule fifteen per cent.'

"'The people won't stand it—they can't,' says I. 'You'll be drownin' the miller.'

"'It won't do 'em any good,' says he. 'Bill an' Eph will make their prices agree with mine—an' the rich folks, they don't worry about prices. I pay a commission to every steward an' butler in this neighborhood.'

"'I won't help you,' says I.

"'In a year from now I'll have money to burn,' he says. 'For one thing, my daughter's education is finished, an' that has cost heavy.'

"'How much would it cost to unlearn it?' I asked. 'That's goin' to cost more than it did to get it, I'm afraid.'

In my opinion the first thing to do with her is to uneducate her.'

"That was like a red-hot iron to Sam. It kind o' het him up.

" 'Why, sir, you don't appreciate her,' says he. 'That girl is far above us all here in Fairview. She's a queen.'

" 'Well, Sam,' I says, 'if there's anything you don't need, just now, it's a queen. If I were you I wouldn't graft that kind o' fruit on the grocery tree. Hams an' coronets don't flourish on the same bush. They have a different kind of a bouquet. They don't harmonize. Then, Sam, what do you want of a girl that's far above ye? Is it any comfort to you to be despised in your own house?'

" 'Mr. Potter, I haven't educated her for my own home or for this community, but for higher things,' says Sam.

" 'You hairy old ass! The first you know,' I says, 'they'll have your skin off an' layin' on the front piaz' for a door-mat.'

"Sam started for the open air. I hated to be harsh with him, but he needed some education himself, and it took a beetle an' wedge to open his mind for it. He lifted his chin so high that the fat swelled out on the back of his neck an' unbuttoned his collar. Then he turned an' said: 'My daughter is too good for this town, an' I don't intend that she shall stay here. She has been asked to marry a man o' fortune in the old country.'

" 'So I surmised, an' I suppose you find that the price o' husbands has gone up,' I says.

"Sam didn't answer me.

" 'They want you to settle some money on the girl—don't they?' I asked.

" 'My wife says it's the custom in the old country,' says Sam.

"Suppose he ain't worth the price?"

"They say he's a splendid fellow," says Sam.

"You let me investigate him," I says, "an' if he's really worth the price I'll help ye to pay it."

"Sam said that was fair, an' thanked me for the offer, an' gave me the young man's address. He was a Russian by the name of Alexander Rolanoff, an' Sam insisted that he belonged to a very old family of large means an' noble blood, an' said that the young man would be in Fairview that summer. I wrote to the mayor of the city in which he was said to live, but got no answer.

"Alexander came. He was a costly an' beautiful young man, about thirty years old, with red cheeks an' curly hair an' polished finger nails, an' wrote poetry. Sometimes ye meet a man that excites yer worst suspicions. Your right hand no sooner lets go o' his than it slides down into your pocket to see if anything has happened; or maybe you take the arm o' yer wife or yer daughter an' walk away. Aleck leaned a little in both directions. But, sir, Sam didn't care to know my opinion of him. Never said another word to me on the subject, but came again to ask about the money.

"Look here, Sam," I says. "You tell Lizzie that I want to talk with her at four o'clock in this office. If she really wants to buy this man, I'll see what can be done about it."

"All right, you talk with her," says he, an' went out.

"In a few minutes Dan showed up.

"Have you seen Lizzie?" says I.

"Not to speak to her," says Dan. "Looks fine, doesn't she?"

"Beautiful!" I says. "How is Marie Benson?"

"Oh, the second time I went to see her she was tryin' to keep up with Lizzie," says he. "She's changed her gait. Was going to New York after a lot o' new frills. I sup-

pose she thought I wanted a grand lady. That's the trouble with all the girls here. There isn't one that has any sense. A man might as well marry the real thing as an imitation. I wish Lizzie would get down off her high horse.'

" 'She's going to swap him for one with still longer legs,' I says. 'Lizzie is engaged to a gentleman o' fortune in the old country.'

"Dan's face began to stretch out as if it was made of injy-rubber.

" 'It's too bad,' says he. 'Lizzie is a goodhearted girl, if she is spoilt.'

" 'Fine girl!' I says. 'An', Dan, I was in hopes that she would discover her own folly before it was too late. But she saw that others had begun to push her in the race an' that she had to let out another link or fall behind.'

" 'Well, I wish her happiness,' says Dan, with a sigh.

" 'Go an' tell her so,' I says. 'Show her that you have some care as to whether she lives or dies.'

"I could see that his feelin's had been honed 'til they were sharp as a razor.

" 'I've seen that fellow,' he says, 'an' he'll never marry Lizzie if I can prevent it. I hate the looks of him. I shall improve the first opportunity I have to insult him.'

" 'That might be impossible,' I suggested.

" 'But I'll make the effort,' says Dan.

"As an insulter I wouldn't wonder if Dan had large capacity when properly stirred up.

" 'Well, anyhow, you don't want to fight a duel,' says I.

" 'Oh, I wouldn't mind that a little!' Dan says. 'I could make him look like thirty cents.'

" 'Then you'd improve his appearance,' says I. 'Better let him alone. I have lines out that will bring information. Be patient.'

"Dan rose and said he would see me soon, an' left with a rather stern look in his face.

"Lizzie was on hand at the hour appointed. We sat down here all by ourselves.

"'Lizzie,' I says, 'why in the world did you go to Europe for a husband? It's a slight to Fairview—a discouragement of home industry.'

"'There was nobody here that seemed to want me,' she says, blushin' very sweet.

"She had dropped her princess manner an' seemed to be ready for straight talk.

"'If that's so, Lizzie, it's your fault,' I says.

"'I don't understand you,' says she.

"'Why, my dear child, it's this way,' I says. 'Your mother an' father have meant well, but they've been foolish. They've educated you for a millionairess, an' all that's lackin' is the millions. You overawed the boys here in Fairview. They thought that you felt above 'em, whether you did or not; an' the boys on Fifth Avenue were glad to play with you, but they didn't care to marry you. I say it kindly, Lizzie, an' I'm a friend o' yer father's, an' you can afford to let me say what I mean. These young fellows wanted the millions as well as the millionairess. One of our boys fell in love with ye an' tried to keep up, but your pace was too hot for him. His father got in trouble, an' the boy had to drop out. Every well-born girl in the village entered the race with ye. An era of extravagance set in that threatened the solvency, the honor, o' this sober old community. Their fathers had to borrow money to keep a-goin'. They worked overtime, they importuned their creditors, they wallowed in low finance while their daughters revelled in the higher walks o' life an' sang in different languages. Even your father—I tell you in confidence, for I suppose he wouldn't have the courage to do

it—is in financial difficulties. Now, Lizzie, I want to be kind to you, for I believe you're a good girl at heart, but you ought to know that all this is what your accomplishments have accomplished.'

"She rose an' walked across the room, with trembling lips. She had seized her parachute an' jumped from her balloon and was slowly approaching the earth. I kept her comin'. 'These clothes an' jewels that you wear, Lizzie—these silks an' laces, these sunbursts an' solitaires, don't seem to harmonize with your father's desire to borrow money. Pardon me, but I can't make 'em look honest. They seem to accuse you. They'd accuse me if I didn't speak out plain to ye.'

"All of a sudden Lizzie dropped into a chair an' began to cry. She had lit safely on the ground.

"It made me feel like a murderer, but it had to be. Poor girl! I wanted to pick her up like a baby an' kiss her. It wasn't that I loved Lizzie less but Rome more. She wasn't to blame. Every spoilt woman stands for a fool-man. Most of them need—not a master—but a frank counsellor. I locked the door. She grew calm an' leaned on my table, her face covered with her hands. My clock shouted the seconds in the silence. Not a word was said for two or three minutes.

"'I have been brutal,' I says, by an' by. 'Forgive me.'

"'Mr. Potter,' she says, 'you've done me a great kindness. I'll never forget it. What shall I do?'

"'Well, for one thing,' says I, 'go back to your old simplicity an' live within your means.'

"'I'll do it,' she says; 'but—I—I supposed my father was rich. Oh, I wish we could have had this talk before!'

"'Did you know that Dan Pettigrew was in love with you?' I put it straight from the shoulder. 'He wouldn't dare tell ye, but you ought to know it. You are

regarded as a kind of a queen here, an' it's customary for queens to be approached by ambassadors.'

"Her face lighted up.

"'In love with me?' she whispered. 'Why, Mr. Potter, I never dreamed of such a thing. I thought he felt above me.'

"'An' he thought you felt above him,' I says.

"'How absurd! how unfortunate!' she whispered. 'I couldn't marry him now if he asked me. This thing has gone too far. I wouldn't treat any man that way.'

"'You are engaged to Alexander, are you?' I says.

"'Yes, we are to be married soon if—if—'

"She paused, and tears came to her eyes again.

"'You are thinking o' the money,' says I.

"'I'm thinking o' the money,' says she. 'It has been promised to him. He will expect it.'

"'Do you think he is an honest man? Will he treat you well?'

"'I'm sure of it.'

"'Then let me talk with him. Perhaps he would take you without anything to boot.'

"'Please don't propose that,' says she. 'I think he's getting the worst of it now. Mr. Potter, would you lend *me* the money? I ask it because I don't want the family to be disgraced or Mr. Rolanoff to be badly treated. He is to invest the money in my name in a very promising venture. He says he can double it within three months.'

"'It would have been easy for me to laugh, but I didn't. Lizzie's attitude in the whole matter pleased me. I saw that her heart was sound. I promised to have a talk with her father and see her again. I looked into his affairs carefully and put him on a new financial basis with a loan of fifteen thousand dollars.

"'One day he came around to my office with Alex-

ander an' wanted me to draw up a contract between him an' the young man. It was a rather crude proposition, an' I laughed, an' Aleck sat with a bored smile on his face.

"'Oh, if he's good enough for your daughter,' I said, 'his word ought to be good enough for you.'

"'That's all right,' says Sam, 'but business is business. I want it down in black an' white that the income from this money is to be paid to my daughter and that neither o' them shall make any further demand on me.'

"Well, I drew up that fool contract, an', after it was signed, Sam delivered ten one-thousand-dollar bills to the young man, who was to become his son-in-law that evening at eight o'clock.

"Within half an hour Dan Pettigrew came roarin' up in front o' my office in the big red automobile of his father. In a minute he came in to see me. He out with his business as soon as he lit in a chair.

"'I've learned that this man Rolanoff is a scoundrel,' says he.

"'A scoundrel!' says I.

"'Of purest ray serene,' says he.

"I put a few questions, but he'd nothing in the way o' proof to offer—it was only the statement of a newspaper.

"'Is that all you know against him?' I asked.

"'He won't fight,' says Dan. 'I've tried him—I've begged him to fight.'

"'Well, I've got better evidence than you have,' I says. 'It came a few minutes before you did.'

"I showed him a cablegram from a London barrister that said:

"'Inquiry complete. The man is a pure adventurer, character *nil*.'

"'We must act immediately,' says Dan.



"'I have telephoned all over the village for Sam,' I says. 'They say he's out in his car with Aleck an' Lizzie. I asked them to send him here as soon as he returns.'

"'They're down on the Post Road. I met 'em on my way here,' says Dan. 'We can overtake that car easy.'

"Well, the wedding hour was approaching an' Aleck had the money, an' the thought occurred to me that he might give 'em the slip somewhere on the road an' get away with it. I left word in the store that if Sam got back before I saw him he was to wait with Aleck in my office until I returned, an' off we started like a baseball on its way from the box to the catcher.

"An officer on his motor-cycle overhauled us on the Post Road. He knew me.

"'It's a case o' sickness,' I says, 'an' we're after Sam Henshaw.'

"'He's gone down the road an' hasn't come back yet,' says the officer.

"I passed him a ten-dollar bill.

"'Keep within sight of us,' I says. 'We may need you any minute.'

"He nodded an' smiled, an' away we went.

"'I'm wonderin' how we're a-goin' to get the money,' I says, havin' told Dan about it.

"'I'll take it away from him,' says Dan.

"'That wouldn't do,' says I.

"'Why not?'

"'Why not!' says I. 'You wouldn't want to be arrested for highway robbery. Then too, we must think o' Lizzie. Poor girl! It's a-goin' to be hard on her, anyhow. I'll try a bluff. It's probable that he's worked this game before. If so, we can rob him without violence an' let him go.'

"Dan grew joyful as we sped along.

" 'Lizzie is mine,' he says. 'She wouldn't marry him now.'

"He told me how fond they had been of each other until they got accomplishments an' began to put up the prices o' themselves. He said that in their own estimation they had riz in value like beef an' ham, an' he confessed how foolish he had been. We were excited an' movin' fast.

" 'Somethin' 'll happen soon,' he says.

"An' it did, within ten minutes from date. We could see a blue car half a mile ahead.

" 'I'll go by that ol' freight-car o' the Henshaws,' says Dan. 'They'll take after me, for Sam is vain of his car. We can halt them in that narrow cut on the hill beyond the Byron River.'

"We had rounded the turn at Chesterville, when we saw the Henshaw car just ahead of us, with Aleck at the wheel an' Lizzie beside him an' Sam on the back seat. I saw the peril in the situation.

"The long rivalry between the houses of Henshaw an' Pettigrew, reinforced by that of the young men, was nearing its climax.

" 'See me go by that old soap-box o' the Henshaws,' says Dan, as he pulled to pass 'em.

"Then Dan an' Aleck began a duel with automobiles. Each had a forty-horse-power engine in his hands with which he was resolved to humble the other. Dan knew that he was goin' to bring down the price o' Alecks an' Henshaws. First we got ahead; then they scraped by us, crumpling our fender on the nigh side. Lizzie an' I lost our hats in the scrimmage. We gathered speed an' ripped off a section o' their bulwarks, an' roared along neck an' neck with 'em. The broken fenders rattled like drums in a battle. I hung on. It seemed as if Fate was tryin' to halt

us, but our horse-power was too high. A dog went under us. It began to rain a little. We were a length ahead at the turn by the Byron River. We swung for the bridge an' skidded an' struck a telephone pole, an' I went right on over the stone fence an' the clay bank an' lit on my head in the water. Dan Pettigrew lit beside me. Then came Lizzie an' Sam—they fairly rained into the river. I looked up to see if Aleck was comin', but he wasn't. Sam bein' so heavy, had stopped quicker an' hit in shallow water near the shore, but, as luck would have it, the bottom was soft an' he had come down feet foremost, an' a broken leg an' some bad bruises were all he could boast of. Lizzie was in hysterics, but seemed to be unhurt. Dan an' I got 'em out on the shore, an' left 'em cryin' side by side, an' scrambled up the bank to find Aleck. He had aimed too low an' hit the wall, an' was dead as a herrin' on the farther side of it. I removed the ten one-thousand-dollar bills from his person to prevent complications an' tenderly laid him down.

"I went back an' broke the sad news to our friends. Sam blubbered. 'Education done it,' said he, as he mournfully shook his head. 'These children have learnt more kinds o' deviltry than they can ever unlearn. We ol' folks ought to know better than try to go their pace.'

" 'We knew better,' I says, 'but we had to keep up with Lizzie.'

"Sam turned toward Lizzie an' moaned in a broken voice, 'I wish it had killed me instead o' Alexander.'

" 'Why so?' I asked.

" 'It costs so much to live,' Sam sobbed, in a half-hysterical way. 'I've got an expensive family on my hands.'

" 'You needn't be afraid o' havin' Lizzie on your hands,' says Dan, who had the girl in his arms.

"'What do you mean?' Sam inquired.

"'She's on my hands an' she's goin' to stay there,' says the young man. 'I'm in love with Lizzie myself. I've always been in love with Lizzie and I'm going to offer a Pettigrew for a Henshaw even.'

"'Your offer is ill-timed,' says Lizzie, as she pulled away an' tried to smooth her hair. 'Let us go and do what we can for poor Mr. Rolanoff.'

"'Mr. Rolanoff hit the side o' the bridge and is dead,' I announced.

"Sam rolled over, his face red as a beet.

"'The money,' he shouted. 'Get it quick.'

"'Here it is!' I said, as I put the roll o' bills in his hand.

"'Poor Aleck!' he says, mournfully, as he counted the money. 'It's awful hard on him.'

"I stopped a passing car, that took us all home.

"So the affair ended without disgrace to anyone, if not without violence, and no one knows of the cablegram save Dan an' me. But the price of Alecks took a big slump in Fairview. No handsome foreign gent could marry any one in this village, unless it was a chambermaid in a hotel.

"That was about the end o' keepin' up with Lizzie in Fairview. Aleck, who had perished near the wire in that race, was buried by Sam in the village cemetery, for he had only seven dollars (an' twenty-three pawn tickets) on his person, all of which was claimed by a lady with bleached hair, who proved to my satisfaction that she was his wife an' his main dependence in time o' need.

"Lizzie went to work in her father's store, an' the whole gang o' Lizzie-chasers had to change their gait again. She organized our prosperous young ladies' club—a model of its kind—the purpose of which is the promotion of simple livin' and a taste for useful work. Every

Thanksgivin' Day they hold a big fair in one o' the churches, an' I distribute a hundred dollars in cash prizes for the best exhibits o' pumpkin pie, chicken pie, bread, rolls, coffee, roast turkey, plain an' fancy sewin', an' so on. One by one the girls have joined an' gone to work, an' every one o' the old set is either married or engaged an' they're all healthy an' happy, an' the servant problem is solved.

"In a few days the story came to its climax. Dan an' Lizzie came into my office together.

" 'Mr. Potter,' says Dan, with a happy smile on his face, 'we're goin' to be married next month.'

"Before I could say a word he had gathered Lizzie up in his arms an' kissed her, an' she countered with a loud smack.

" 'You silly man,' she says, 'you could have had me long ago.'

" 'If I'd only 'a' known it,' he says.

" 'Oh, the ignorance o' some men!' she says, lookin' into his eyes.

" 'It exceeds the penetration o' some women,' I says.

" 'They came together ag'in quite spiteful. I separated 'em.

" 'Quit,' I says. 'Stop pickin' on each other. It provokes me. I'm goin' to give a prize for the simplest wedding that ever took place in Fairview,' I says. 'It will be five hundred dollars in gold for the bride. Don't miss it.'

" 'The marriage will occur at noon,' says Lizzie. 'There'll be nothing but simple morning frocks. The girls can wear calico if they wish. No jewels, no laces, no elaborate breakfast.'

" 'An' no presents, but mine, that cost over five dollars each,' I says.

" 'An' that's the way it was.'

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## 18. MY LOST NOVEL

ALWAYS my home has been as beautiful as my taste and means would allow me to make it. Thrushwood overlooking the Sound in a part of Greenwich called Riverside was an inspiration to me and to my wife and friends. There I knew the old hospitalities of nature and its lavish appeal to me in color, sound, shadow, and fragrance. The approach led through a small forest floored in early summer with ferns and blooming wild geraniums while the air above them was filled with the halted snow of the dogwood trees. Often its color was enriched by the flashing wings of the scarlet tanager. But above all I loved its silences, broken by the plaintive calling of the wood thrush.

We could look far from our lawns and windows over green slopes and shining waters. Always a water view has been important to me. There I could see across a quiet bay—leading out to sea—and beyond it the distant shore of Long Island. The bay was filled at sunset with the shadows of sails and islands and the vivid colors of the sky. As the night fell one saw in it the gold of moon and star and lantern light.

Often in the evening great men sat at my fireside and neighbors dropped in to hear them talk. Owen Young told us of journeys in China and Japan. Lawrence Abbott of his intimate acquaintance with Theodore Roosevelt, General Greely of his quest for the North Pole, A. Barton Hepburn of his lion hunt in Africa, Job Hedges of his adventures as a campaigner, Alexander Woollcott of his

work at the battle front in the World War. What exciting stories of danger by sea and land we heard!

My life has never been in peril by fire, but fire ate up a novel and a year's work for me.

It took better things, the loss of which has been hard to bear, so my regret for the novel has been comparatively slight. Perhaps, after all, it were better lost. It was a tale of the mountains of western North Carolina in a valley of which I had spent three winters. Its title was

*The Tower of a Hundred Bells*

I had destroyed the notes and the first drafts to which I had given myself unsparingly for many months. It was at last typed in two perfect copies that lay on my study table at the west end of the second floor of the house. I was going to town next day to take one copy to my publisher and the other to my safe.

With a sense of relief that the task was at last off my hands I went to New Jersey with my friends Alexander Grosset and George Doran for a game of golf with Governor Griggs. Coming home in the darkness soon after eight o'clock, I was greeted by a neighbor on the station platform.

"Probably you do not know that your house is afire," he said. "The family is all right. Get into my car."

The flaming house was surrounded by the local fire companies and many sympathetic neighbors. The most of our treasures lay on the lawns and garden paths. Many were the food of the leaping flames. My wife had had a great love of beauty and a rare art in creating it. There was a kind of magic in her hands. Her gift had made that home a delightful and beloved refuge. The shock of seeing it spoiled broke her health. There was the great loss. I did not then give a moment's thought to the novel.

It was a tale of the red-blooded mountain folk whose character and dialect I had studied with much care. My hero had a remarkable voice. He could imitate all the beasts and birds of the mountain country and the voices of men. This led to interesting complications in the development of my mystery.

It was in 1916 that I wrote this novel of the Great Smoky Mountains. I brought a mountain woman, who had never ridden on the cars, to my home in the North, and made a careful study of her life and dialect. I think she was the greatest person I have known. This I write with no hesitation, because of her faith, her kindness, her charity, her cheerfulness in the midst of misfortunes that might well have utterly broken the spirit.

Just lately I have discovered these notes that relate to her wooing and her early married life. They are, I think, too good to be lost. They give one a notion of the truth and vividness of the lost novel and here they are:

At our next meeting Mrs. Gentry sat with her sewing on the little shaded verandah while she told me the story of her life.

"I were twelve when pappy moved from Wautauga into Madison County. Tuk everythin' in a big covered wagon. Me an' my brother druv the cows an' milked 'em into stone jugs. When evenin' come we'd stop where they were water an' boil some corn meal an' have a milk an' mush supper an' then pappy would play on his fiddle. He had a sister in Madison County an' when we got to Aunt Elly's, Shed Gentry were thar an' he holped us unload. He were a long, gawky feller 'bout fifteen yur old. They were somethin' quare 'bout one o' his fingers kindly split like. He looked terrible homely to me.

"That same yur, one day, pappy come home an' the



horse done kicked the barn down on top o' him an' killed him. I were erway to one o' the neighbors. Their children had some play purtys that had been sent, an' I were lookin' at their purty things an' fussin' with them. Never played no more in all my life.

"Mammy couldn't do no work much a'ter that. I had to spin eround an' take the load an' be mother to the little uns. 'Twere hard on me, an' mammy as cross as a crow in a cage. I would go off in the woods an' hide an' jist cry an' cry. One day Shed, he were thar, an' he seed me go off in the woods, an' he follered me an' he cried too, an' said he'd holp me. An' he told me how they pecked on him an' bothered him over to his house. Sometimes he'd slip over an' holp me with my washin'. Lord o' mercy! how I loved that a boy a'ter that. I were thinkin' a'ter him an' worryin' a'ter him night an' day.

"I had learnt myself to read so's I could read the Bible a little bit, an' that winter they built a log school-house an' I went to school tew weeks. We studied the Bible an' the ol' blue-back spellin' book an' I got so I could spell powerful good fer a mount'in girl. I could jist wade right through the whole crowd, all but Shed Gentry—nobody could spell like him.

"I never talked to no boy much. Onct when Bill Agers' boy come an' asked me to go to meetin' with him, I had a dish o' coffee to grind up, an' I were so skeered I swallered a button, an' what I done with the coffee I never did know—never twil this day.

"Onct when I went to the neighbors an' borried a gourd o' soap an' were walkin' home with it, I seed Bill Henline come runnin' to ketch up with me. I run like a skeered b'ar, an' kept out o' his way, I were so ershamed to have him see me with a gourd o' soap in my hands. He wouldn't 'a' ketched me ef he'd a been a horse. He thought

'twere 'cause I hated him, but I didn't. I only hated the soap.

"When I went to school or church, Shed would always jump out o' the bushes somewhar, an' come hoppin' a'ter me, an' tellin' me erbout his troubles, fer his pappy pecked him awful, an' his brother Bob were turrible mean to him.

"Onct when I were fourteen there were goin' to be a spellin'-school an' Shed were goin' to spell ag'in me. He met me in the road an' had an apple in his hand, an' I says:

" 'I'm mad at you.'

" 'Why?' says he.

" ' 'Cause you're goin' to spell ag'in me.'

" 'Ef you'll take this apple an' won't be mad, I'll let you spell me down,' says he.

" 'All right,' I says, an' my face got as hot as a smokin' griddle.

"Onct upon a time, an' hits as true as God's word, he come over to our house one day an' said he'd git married ef he could find anybody that were fool ernough to marry him.

"I were jist a little over fifteen yur old. I were kindly skeered, an' poured a dipper o' water all over the stove. A few days a'ter that I went to git mammy's spinnin'-wheel over to a neighbor's. The snow were half a leg deep, an' I were luggin' that ol' wheel erlong an' hit bore down heavy. I got erbout halfways home, an' I seed Shed a-comin'. I felt awful ershamed to have him see me luggin' that ol' wheel, an' I allowed I'd put hit over the fence an' go ercross the fields, so as I wouldn't meet him. I were tard an' I tried to lift hit over, but 'twere too heavy. Then I seed him come runnin' an' I jist stood thar an' cried. He come up to me an' says:

"'What be you a-doin'?"

"'Takin' this wheel home."

"'Let me help you."

"He lifted hit over the fence. Then he leaned ag'in a rail an' tuk my hand, an' I looked erway to Lar'l Mount'in.

"'Do you 'member what I said th' other day?' says he.

"'No, I don't 'member,' says I. 'What did you say?"

"'That I were ergoin' to git married, an' go erway over to Marshall an' take up some land,' says he. 'Jane, I want you to go. I jist want you to go with me. Will you?"

"'Course I will,' says I.

"He weren't purty—jist a big mount'in huger, but my! I did love him, an' when he drewed me up erg'in him an' kissed me I were jist choked with happiness, an' they couldn't make me cross a'ter that.

"Next day we walked by his house together, an' the children all stood out in front an' hollered an' yelled at us.

"'There goes Shed an' his sugar honey,' says they. 'Goin' to be married—goin' to be married.'

"I never was so ershamed in all my life.

"Shed told his people that he were goin' to git married an' his mammy cut an outdacious swell erbout hit. 'What be you ergoin' to do with her—she ain't nothin' but a child,' says she.

"Mammy, she didn't want me to marry, but my brother were twelve yur old an' my sister were thirteen, an' I allowed 'twere time fer them to take my place, an' I told them I wouldn't stay thar no longer.

"Well, we got married an' nex' day we tuk a honeymoon walk o' twenty-five mile to Marshall, an' 'twere

rainin' hard when we got thar late in the evenin', an' we were wet so our shoes sucked, an' our clothes they felt like as if they bin soaked in a tub.

"'Fore we got thar we sot down by the road to rest, soppin' wet but awful happy. He kissed me an' says:

"'Be you happy?'

"'Only one thing could make me ary bit happier,' I says.

"'What's that?' he says.

"'A weddin' ring,' says I.

"'You cain have it, honey,' he says, an' he done bought hit for me that night, an' I'm er-wahrin' hit right now."

She pointed to her ring, worn to a mere thread of gold, on her finger.

"When we got back Shed hared some land an' went to work buildin' a pole cabin. Jist little logs 'twere made of. You could 'a' picked a dog up by the tail an' throwed him out o' the chimley, it were so low an' big. I could set my chair in the hearth an' look out the top o' hit. By the next meal he had us a little table an' a stool so we both set to the table nex' time. We lived thar three yur an' made tobaccer. We had one ol' bed, back in the corner, an' it had jist one leg on hit. If anyone come over when he were erway I hid under that bed. I jist saved every feather an' put 'em in a poke that hung by the stove.

"Then we begun cl'arin' new ground on the slick mount'in side an' raisin' tobaccer."

"Did you use tobacco?" I asked.

"No, I never used tobaccer," she went on. "Every one o' the family used tobaccer an' I had dyspepsey an' were a pore, lean, yellor-lookin' thing. Mammy always claimed that hit were 'cause I did not use tobaccer. If

I'd use tobaccer I'd be as strong as the other children. Mammy were that bad a'ter tobaccer that if they want none in the house she'd be lookin' out o' the door every five minutes to see ef somebody were comin' who could give her a chaw. Down thar all the girls spit amber 'fore they was ten yur old but me.

"A'ter I were married I got sick an' they'd ask me, my mammy an' the neighbors would, why I didn't use tobaccer, an' said I would be strong like the rest o' them, if I would.

"I said: 'No, I be too nice a womern to use that filthy stuff. I tried but I got as sick as an ol' buzzard.' "

"Could you save any money?" I asked.

"Never see no money," said she. "Saved everything else or I reckon we'd 'a' starved. Scratched up every feather for my beds. Got the habit o' savin'. All summer I'd kindly scratch up the sunlight an' save hit for the dark days. Hit come handy when the children all got the measles to onct an' I got hit too. Holped me to take keer o' them an' do the work. Holped me when one had the tyford fever. I had to give her a teaspoonful o' milk every five minutes. When I'd go to sleep in the night the spoon would drop out o' my hand on to the floor an' wake me an' tell me to 'tend to my work.

"Men and women used to come to me to have the blues took off of 'em, an' I'd jist show 'em how they ought to be thankful. They always come a'ter me when they was sick.

"I'd find 'em crowded into a little room, eround some un burnin' up with fever, moanin' an' wringin' their hands an' skeerin' the sick un, an' breathin' up the air. I'd drive 'em all out o' the house, an' open the door an' windows an' when the sick were half dead I've pulled

'em up the slant, with jist air an' norushment an' cheerful talk.

"Now thar were a neighbor girl. One day she an' her brothers were rollin' logs, an' they left her to chunk up some small logs on the log heaps, an' in the a'ternoon they heard her singin', that was, they thought she were singin'. They went round to whar she were, an' she were cryin'.

"They says: 'What's the matter, honey?'

"She says: 'I got a pain in my hip.'

"They took her up an' carried her down to the house an' her mother sent for me. For six months that child were never out o' her chair 'cept as two people were by her to help her. Then her hip bu'sted an' a'ter hit bu'sted she wanted to be put on the bed, but she couldn't b'ar to lay still. Well, we stood right over that child for seven months more, night an' day, an' I don't have no idee that she lay quiet five minutes at one time durin' that seven months. We jist turned her back an' fo'th.

"Well, a'ter hit busted, her leg perished down.

"Erbout the end of that seven months the doctor come thar an' brought another doctor with him to hold a consul' over this child. He said thar were some kind o' worm eatin' up the marrer o' her bones. He were erbout to give up hopes. She were beggin' her father an' me for a little winter-john apple. The father promised her he would ask the doctor an' if he said so, they would give hit to her.

"She thought her father wasn't goin' to ask, an' she looked up to me an' says: 'Will you ask?' an' I said I would.

"Her father followed the doctor out to the door, an' I tuk the apple an' went out. An' I says to the doctor:

'Do you think 't will hurt Betty for me to give her this little green apple.'

"He says: 'They is no hopes expected for her. You give her ary thing in the world that she wants.' An' he looked at her father an' said: 'The child cain't live. Every nerve that is in her j'int's has rotted, an' she cain't last long.'

"Her mother said for me to scrape the apple, an' she said she would go an' cook a chicken for her. She said she had been beggin' for chicken. The child had lain thar thirteen months.

"I went in an' set down an' she said: 'What did the doctor say?'

"I says: 'You cain have one bite o' this apple an' ef hit don't hurt you, in a short time you shall have another bite.'

"So I scraped her one bite and give her ernother bite an' said ef hit didn't hurt her, I would give her more in two hours. Her mother cooked the chicken.

"They was goin' to let her eat the whole chicken an' drink the broth, I knowed she'd be plum foundered.

"Now the girl seed they was skeered erbout her an' said: 'Did the doctor say they were not much chanct o' me livin'?''

"Her father an' mother looked at her an' says: 'They were not much chanct.' An' asked her ef she felt ready to die.

"She said that she wasn't preparrd an' wanted that they should send down for the minister to come up an' pray for her. She had faith that ef we all prayed earnest to God, she'd git well, or have time to be preparrd. So all the people as could pray or would pray was sent for an' all come, an' some of us waited on the girl an' turned her an' fed her, but at the same time somebody was on

their knees prayin' for her all that day. We prayed an' prayed an' prayed twil our tongues was slick but, I reckon, the chicken an' the little winter-john apple prayed the best of any of us. An' she begun to get better from that time.

"We had nine children. Sunday mornin' I'd git up early an' milk an' git breakfast an' git the children ready. Then we'd leg it to Sunday School three mile erway. At nine we was thar. Got home in time to git dinner. The sun would be hot on the little uns comin' back. Make their faces plum sore. Sometimes we'd have to pick up the littlest uns an' carry 'em g'in we got home. If I were alone I'd be totin' three all to onct part o' the way.

"A'ter awhile my sister broke down an' I tuk her five children g'in she got better which she never done an' brought 'em up. My brother died o' tyford fever an' I tuk his babies—three on 'em—an' brought them up too. Good land, mister! when the las' baby walked out o' my arms an' I were shet of 'em forever I felt kindly cold an' lonesome an' was shamed to see folks; seemed as though my breast ought to be covered by a baby when anybody come to the door. Babies be sech good company. Ye don't git lonesome with 'em. Ye kin learn 'em real young to know when you're funnin' with 'em er teasin' er sorrowful. An' ye kin visit with 'em. Ye don't know what heaven is, honey, twil ye've held hit in yer arms years an' years as I done."

Here was a woman whose charity had been equal to all demands upon it. Her little home had been crowded with her own children and yet she had made room in it for eight others.

"No, sir, never lost a child o' the hull nine," she went on. "One day my littlest boy were clombin' a log fence an' pulled the top log down on him an' smashed his



leg jist below the hip. Oh, what a night I had! Gritted my teeth together an' held the little feller in my arms an' he yellin' like a painter g'in the doctor would come. Tuk fourteen hours to git him thar but he tinkered that leg up an' saved hit.

"Six o' the children had the measles all to onct an' I had it tew but I kept eround an' done all the work o' the house. Cyarded an' spun an' wove an' made clothes fer the family an' done the washin' an' mendin' an' cookin' an' whatever other else there was to be did.

"Often in plantin' or hoein' time pappy an' me ud work all night together on the cove—'bout the only chanct we had to visit like we used to done. We'd have our suppers at midnight an' go back an' scratch eround on the mount'in an' talk twil daylight come an' the babies 'gun to holler fer breakfast. Nex' day I'd be kindly tard—I would. Sometimes I lay down on the bed twil I'd see some little feller come in with holes in his breeches. Then I'd clomb out an' pray an' go to work ag'in. When we needed hit, I'd leave the babies with pappy an' go off to mill with half a bushel o' corn two an' a half miles an' back. Kindly enjoyed hit on a purty day—hit were so still an' nice in the woods. Rested me. Pappy could watch the babies an' scratch eround with his hoe. They missed me dreadful when I got gone, an' the babies would holler lonesome—pappy said—and oh how I loved to get back!"

"Have you used the whip much in bringing up your children?" I asked.

"No. Mammy were always peckin' me over the head with a stick. She were turrible ill an' cross. I were that foundered with the peckin' that I declar'd I never would whip if God sent me children."

"What kind of food did you give them to eat?"

"Mount'in children got nothin' to eat but meat skins boiled up with onions an' potaters but they done growed big an' fat. They could jest mortally dew the work—them mount'in hugers. Meat skins? They was the skins off of pork an' bacon an' hams."

"Tell me more about your life in the mountains?" I urged.

"One child been awful nigh to me always, and 't were due to an accident," she went on. "Plantin' time I used to go and help pappy clean up the slick mount'in side. Many 's the time we worked all night together on them slants.

"Well, 'twere plantin' time and the rain crow were singin' purty. We cut a round o' bark off a tree and put the baby in it. 'Twere a kind of a cradle and she went to sleep in it. The sun crimped the green bark tight on my baby and she rolled down that steep mount'in and we found her way below us in a bunch o' br'ars.

"One evenin', a'ter meetin', I says to Aunt Tildy:

"'Will you take a walk with me in the mornin'?' I says.

"'Whar to?' says she.

"'Oh jist 'round an' 'round,' says I.

"I went down next mornin' to her house. They were a big skift o' snow on the ground. I give her a stick an' I had one myself. We started out an' walked a little ways. Then I says:

"'Thar be a wild still up hur in the mount'ins. I want you to help me hunt hit. I cain't git none o' my folks to help me, so I'm ergoin' to try an' find hit.'

"She ketched her breath. They cut up wild when they thought ary one were a'ter their stills. Onct they was a man come to take the senses o' the people, and

Henry Slimp druv him erway at the p'int o' a gun—they was so carritly o' strangers.

"'Hain't ye skeered?' she whispers.

"'Cain't no more 'n kill us,' says I. 'But I reckon the Lord 'll take keer o' us. My son-in-law an' one o' my boys went over to that still an' got drunk las' Sunday, an' they fit an' fit, an' scratched around twil they knocked the skin all off o' each other. They's got to be a stop put to it. Them stills has got to be cut out o' hur and me and you has got to do hit.'

"We started up the mount'in—jist as steep as that, jist like that, so steep—but we could ketch erlong with our sticks on the trees an' bushes. An' it were the snowiest day I ever did see in my life. The fog froze on the timber twil hit were perfectly awful lookin' to be out.

"I went erhead, as I were the youngest; I went pullin' up the mount'in, an', by and by, we got to the top.

"We went on an' started down eround the mount'in. The walk were jist so narrer that we couldn't walk side by side, so we started Injun like.

"I guess we went a mile from thar and the snow most half a leg deep.

"Then we came to a dreadful la'r'l, hit 's la'r'l an' ivy, we call hit. I think youse call hit la'r'l and rhody-dendrum. Thar were a lot o' big pine trees thar. Oh, how snowy 'twere out o' that la'r'l trail—looked like you'd go down over your head.

"We stopped to git our breaths and my heart were floppin' like the wings of a skeered potteridge. 'Twere so still down thar. Bang! goes a rifle right nigh us and a bullet skittered through the bushes over our heads an' down come a lot o' snow on us like hit had tore inter a feather bed. Seemed like my back had bruk in two in the middle. I knowed somebody were watchin' us. Aunt

Tildy's face turned white like 'twere snowin' inside o' her.

"'Skeered?' she whispers.

"'Bawdacious!' I says. 'Let's pray to God a minnit.'

"We done prayed in our hearts. I see Aunt Tildy's lips movin', but they made nary bit o' noise no more than the wings o' a whippoorwill.

"'They sha'n't skeer me,' I says. 'I'm jist ergoin' right on. The Lord has told me to.'

"The bushes jist flipped up under our clothes and our stockin's an' dresses was all wet.

"Well, I says: 'Now you take down this erway and I'll go up that erway.'

"So I went erbout twenty-five yards, I reckon, and come to a trail eround the mount'in. Hit's jist as slick as glass.

"We dug erlong on that trail erbout half a mile eround the side o' the mount'in and I jist run into the still-house. I stepped back a step or tew. I thought somebody might be in thar and shoot us.

"I stepped back and said: 'Here 'tis, Aunt Tildy.'

"And thar 'twere, and we got home wet an' erbout half froze. No, he couldn't afford to kill us. And pap went for the revenoo officer, but when we got down thar the still were gone, and that were the windin' up o' hit."

"I hear that up in the mountains they believe in witches," I remarked. "Do you believe in them?"

"Don't guess I do—not big—but they's some that do. I always allowed hit didn't do no harm. Used to be a man up thar by the name o' Jacksbo Hame. He said the way to know if ye be a witch doctor is to go out on the mount'in at sunrise an' shoot nine times at the sun. If ye be a doctor right a'ter the las' shot blood'll flow out o' yer gun bar'l."

It astonished me to learn that those mountaineers

were really living in the early part of the seventeenth century with the superstitions of the common folk of old England.

"Can you tell me a witch story?" I asked.

"I cain tell you a witch story that my mammy used to tell. Onct they were a boy name o' Jack, an' he were dreadful worritty an' pore. This little boy he had no mammy an' no pappy, an' were real tard [tired] o' livin', an' so he thought he would har [hire] to the miller to 'tend his mill. That were a way o' dyin', everybody said. He went over to the miller's house, an' he says: 'I want to har to you to 'tend to your mill for you.'

"'Well, I'll tell you, Jack, every miller that I har jist lives one night.'

"'Well, bedads, I'd jist as soon be dead as erlive, so I believe I'll take the job,' said Jack.

"The man hard him, give him some meat an' some coffee, an' told him he would find cookin' tools down to the mill.

"So Jack went down to the old log-mill. He cooked his supper, set down by his fry'n-pan on the floor, broke him a piece o' bread an' begun to sop hit into his pan o' fat. Were great big cracks in the mill-house—'twere jist a pole crib—an' the moon were a shinin' through 'em purty an' bright. All of a sudden like hit got as dark as a dungeon, an' the cracks looked like they was filled up with coals o' fire. Jack blowed a blaze to see what had darkened the house so. When he did he seed all them cracks jist packed full o' cats. Every one o' the cats were black but one. This were an old tabby cat, an' the old tabby cat jumped right down by his fry'n-pan, reached hits paw over into the sop an' says: 'Sop-dol-sop.'

"Jack says: 'If you put your ol' paw in that erg'in, I'll whack hit off.'

"She reached her paw in erg'in and says: 'Sop-dol-sop.'

"Then they were a quick swimmish o' cats! Ev'ry one o' them jumped right down on to the floor an' stood with their ha'r riz, lookin' at him.

"She reached her paw in erg'in an' he whacked hit off, and when he whacked hit turned to a womern's hand with a ring on one finger. 'Twere a grand, purty ring. He picked that hand up an' couldn't take the ring off hit so he stuck the hand in his pocket. Every one o' the cats jist jumped right out through the cracks, like streaks o' black lightnin'.

"An' soon as the cats had gone erway, that womern's hand 'gun to jump eround in his pocket, like a chicken with the head cut off o' hit, and he tried to throw hit out but hit hung on to the cloth, and he were skeered, so he hollered and yelled and run up to the miller's house. Soon as he got out o' the mill that hand dod [died] and lay still as a rag in his pocket. The miller heard him and come out.

"Jack showed him the womern's hand an' told him 'bout the cats.

"The miller says: 'That's my wife's hand. She's sick this mornin'. I'll take this hand, an' go see what she has to say.'

"He went in whar his wife lay in bed, and he says to her: 'Sarah, let me see your left hand.'

"She poked him out her right.

"He says: 'Sarah, let me see your left hand.'

"She begun cryin' and says: 'Hit's gone.'

"He says: 'Yes, hur hit is.' He says: 'Sarah, you're a witch, and you're the one that's done killed my millers. Now, if you'll tell me who every one o' the rest o' them

witches is, an' let me have them all burned, then they sha'n't burn you.'

"So he had the rest o' the witches burned and that made their friends all mad, but he wouldn't let them burn his wife, 'count o' his promise; but he let them hang her. And that put an end to a good many witches in these hur parts."

This is one of the tales that she told to her children:

Onct there was a boy an' I never did see no one so outdacious brave. He were one o' the bravest humans that ever did live. He were a shamickin' erlong the road one day an' were passin' through a town. A king pops out an' says:

"What be your name?"

"Stiff Dick."

"Be you a right brave man?"

"Yes, bedads, I be."

"Well now, we have got a wild municorn over in this yere country an' we want to git him killed. I will give anybody a thousand dollars that will kill him."

"Well, bedads, pay me five hundred down an' I will kill him for you."

The king slaps down the money.

Stiff Dick, he says to himself: "I've got five hundred dollars now an' I'm ergoin' to leave hur."

So he started over through the woods an' mount'ins an' the municorn smelled him an' tuk right a'ter him. So Dick started to run an' he run an' run an' run. Late in the evenin' he were gettin' mighty nigh tard to death an' he didn't see no chanct 'cept to clomb a big oak. He made for the tree. He didn't have time to clomb hit so he run eround hit. The municorn giv a jump at him. He were tryin' fer to nail him to the tree with the one long horn

that stuck out o' his forehead. Dick dodged an' the unicorn he jus' stove his horn plumb into the wood an' couldn't pull hit out.

The boy come eround an' he seed the unicorn were ketched tight. Dick went on back to town.

King come out an' says: "Did you git the unicorn?"

"Lord o' mercy! Never seed no unicorn! A little bull calf with one horn come at me back in the mount'ins. I picked him up by the tail, stove his head agin a tree an' stuck him thar by his horn. If you want him killed, you cain go up thar an' kill him yourself. I reckon 'twould pleasure you to kill him."

So the king got him an army o' men an' went up an' killed the unicorn. Come back. Paid Stiff Dick his other five hundred dollars.

"Well, now, bedads, I'm gittin' rich," says Dick. "I'm ergoin' to git out o' this part o' the country while I've got a thousand dollars."

The king says: "Now, we've got one more thing that we want you to kill."

"Well, what be hit?"

"Well, hit's a l'on, a wild l'on."

King paid him five hundred dollars more an' he started to git out o' the country. Went up in the mount'ins on his way home, an' the l'on smelled him an' tuk a'ter him. He run an' run all day long an' were jist tard to death. The l'on stopped to kill a dog that were out thar a huntin'. That give Dick his chanct. He seed a lone, slim pine an' he clomb hit an' the l'on come a'ter Dick an' started to gnaw the tree down, an' he gnawed an' gnawed an' while he were ergnawin' Dick jumped right erstraddle o' the l'on's back. Hit skeered the l'on an' he started to run an' Stiff Dick he held right tight into the l'on's ha'r. The l'on were so skeered he didn't know which



erway to git to, so he done made a straight line right to the town. Skeered the men an' they run out with their guns an' shot the l'on down.

Stiff Dick he got off an' 'gun to cut a terrible rusty. He swore straight up an' down that he were breakin' that l'on to make the king a ridy horse, an' he cut up so that the king made the men pay him another thousand dollars an' when he left thar he had riches an' riches.

I had a movable shop after the house burned in 1917 and I built a modest home on a lake shore in Winter Park, Florida. I had dreamed of a small but beautiful structure. Murray King gave me an Oriental design, and William Rutherford Mead, of McKim, Mead and White, gave the design the approval I sought with the word "beautiful." I think that many have agreed with him. I have had happy and fortunate years in that home. My health has improved. Since I moved to Florida I have had no illness save a wry neck that came upon me in the North. The winter weather is mostly summer-like and delightful. I have more than half a mile of trails, one of them looping into a beautiful hammock. Almost every afternoon I am either tramping there or playing golf. The weather, which enables one to breathe fresh air heated by sunlight, is only a part of the assets offered by Florida. After late December, strawberries, new peas and string beans, and a variety of fruits and vegetables, gathered the day we eat them, are on our table. Why should not Old Age and Failing Strength delay their coming surrounded as we are by beauty, good company, and almost every solace that a metropolis could offer.

But at the end of all this I have to record a sorrow that no child was ever born in any home of mine, save the one in which my life began.



## PART IV

GREAT TRUE STORIES THAT I HAVE DISCOVERED  
IN MY JOURNEY UP THE ROAD



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## 19. A SON OF HEAVEN

IT happened years ago that I came into possession of certain facts in a beautiful mystery. In all my reading and listening I have learned of nothing like it.

The mystery was a man with a great light in his soul shining out of the shadow that surrounded him. I was to learn that it was a shadow which for a time had darkened the world. When I say of this strange man that he had the magic of a genius comparable only to that of the immortal few, I am quoting men qualified to estimate it. He was a master of the violin wandering in the countryside where I was born, unable or unwilling to explain himself.

We knew that he was called Nick Goodall. The compositions of the great masters came from his instrument. Yet his marvelous skill and knowledge were utterly unmerchutable. He played only to satisfy his own ears and those of the people who chanced to hear him and always without price. It was as free as the air we breathed.

I was brought up in a countryside filled with hard-working people who had a rich endowment of common sense. Uncommon things excited their curiosity. About all the music they had known was that of the fiddler, the canary bird, the asthmatic cottage organ, and the melodious evangelism of Moody and Sankey. Once a well-trained lady singer from New York delivered some famous arias in the Town Hall. Most of the audience agreed "that it didn't make sense." Trilled declarations in a foreign language did not appeal to them. Yet everyone felt

the magic of Nick's bow. Often those hard-handed people would sit until midnight hearing it and loving it.

He seemed to like the pleasant hills and valleys of northern New York in summer weather. How and where he lived in winter I have never learned. Some poorhouse may then have been his home. Nobody knew where he came from. If he could have told, he never did.

He arrived in a village dusty and footsore, his violin in a waterproof case. The tavernkeeper gave him a hearty welcome to which he made no reply. He was a silent man. He did not seem to doubt his title to hospitality. Word went through the village that Nick had arrived. Before the time for early candle lighting, village folk thronged the hotel to hear him play. The office, the parlor, and the stairway were soon crowded. When he came from his room, the great master took the chair reserved for him, his violin at his side. He was as indifferent to the people around him as the clock on the wall. He lived the inner life.

All eyes were on this strange ambassador of heaven, impatient for him to begin to play. He never responded to an invitation. Soon he would take the violin from its case and tune it. A silence fell. It was like a calm sea waiting for the wind. Then with his magic he opened the door of a new world. It was a dream world of noble and impassioned sounds coming from the imaginations of Chopin, Liszt, Beethoven, Schumann, Schubert, Bach, Brahms, Berlioz, and Paganini.

The violin had its own language. Its noble eloquence was a thing new to the simple folk among whom Nick had come. And yet they felt its power—even they, accustomed mostly to the emotions created by the political orator, the revivalist, the horse trader, the circus, the fair, and the prize pumpkin.

The great, rich tones, the swiftly dying cadences, the mighty rhythms, the impassioned face, the marvelous technique, gave some of them a memory that was like a tower on the commonplace level of their lives.

Often the spell would be suddenly and rudely broken. The player would stop with a loud and shocking exclamation. What did it mean? One phase of its meaning was quite apparent. His deep emotions were not under control. He was like a man in the breakers coming from the sea. They swept him off his feet. He was undoubtedly a great master but not a master of himself. That explained why he was a wandering minstrel, strangely unknown. Yet the great gift of this man was not going to waste. It was having an effect especially on the spirit of the young. I heard of one whom it led into high paths.

One day some young men driving along a country road found him sitting in the shade of a great beech tree, at the edge of a grove by the roadside. He was resting, his violin at his side. They hitched their horse and walked toward him.

"How do you do, Mr. Goodall?" one of them asked.

The violinist nodded and said:

"Yes."

It was a curious answer. Naturally, the boy thought that Nick had not understood him.

"I heard you play at the Rolston House one evening in June. It was wonderful."

Nick did not answer. He took the violin from its case and tuned it.

"I play for the birds," he said.

He played a lively, merry piece of music. It may have been *The Devil's Trill*, which he often played.

The piece came to its end. The player sat, his violin in his lap, listening to many birds singing joyously in the

treetop above their heads—robins, wood thrushes, winter wrens. He smiled as he looked upward. The applause of his feathered audience seemed to please him.

Of what was he thinking when he began a solemn, meditative piece on the fourth string? Here was art that would have created thunders of applause in any great city. In it was the voice of love and sorrow and deep regret. It was like a thrilling tale of history. His eyes were wet when he stopped and shouted: "Jesus Christ!" It was not profanity. Was it a raptured exclamation of joy or did it come from some memory?

Milan Lewis thought he could control Goodall and commercialize his genius. He dressed him up and advertised him extensively for a concert in a city of 15,000 people. The big hall was filled. Nick kept them waiting some time for the music promised.

I knew Lewis, himself a musician, and I remember his description of the concert. Nick played like an angel, beginning with a ballad of Chopin's that started slowly and solemnly, soon quickening its pace and challenging the most brilliant technique of which a master is capable. He won the heart of his audience and then put his heel upon it. The tempo changed, returning to the solemn theme of the great composer with tones that were symbols of immensity. He played to the end of the passage and the slow procession of deep tones seemed to light his face with their beauty. One little note wavered into silence like a falling leaf. Lewis could hear dimly the humming strings when Nick stopped and shouted the name of the Savior. What a shock! It was like a drunkard's oath in a prayer meeting. Half the audience jumped in their seats and settled back appalled.

Nick added another shocking exclamation, in his



excitement, as he wiped his face with his new handkerchief.

A number of ladies rose and walked out with a swish of skirts and an indignant toss of the head. Others followed them. Squads of churchmen were leaving. The music was great, but the iniquity was greater. A time had come for good people to do their duty. The conscience of the community was touched. It was a thing not to be trifled with. The golden splendor of no poet's dream could hold them, and Mr. Lewis's dream of wealth abruptly ended.

It came to my mind when I was writing *Eben Holden*. I spoke of him rather briefly in that book. More than a hundred letters came to my desk about Nicholas Goodall. Patrick Gilmore and Thomas F. Ryan of the Mendelssohn Quintet in Boston—both eminent musicians—wrote of his playing, with great enthusiasm. Others wrote that he had spent some time in Salem, Massachusetts, and in Elmira, New York.

At last there came a letter that threw a stream of light on the mystery. I learned that Nick was the son of a man who was first violinist in the excellent orchestra of Ford's Theatre in Washington when Lincoln was assassinated and that as a boy he had shown remarkable talent for the violin. He had toured the continent as a prodigy when he was eight years of age. I learned also that in 1865 he was sixteen years old—a slim, pale, silent lad who practiced from six to ten hours a day. Only a masterful genius would have the patience to do that. He was memorizing the compositions of the great masters in preparation for a world tour. Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln had heard him play and had been impressed by his power.

The world tour did not come off. Not until I was

getting my color for a certain Lincoln book did I begin to realize what had happened to this sensitive young genius. No doubt he was in the theater with his father that night of April 14, 1865. Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln were going to be there. Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln loved to hear the boy play and between the final acts probably he was scheduled to play for them. His father was to be his impresario, a point not to be missed.

Now we go to Ford's Theatre on that fateful night. It was filled with the best people, for the famous Sothern was playing his great role of Lord Dundreary in *Our American Cousin*. He was inimitable. The presidential party was late in arriving. It consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln and two young lovers—Miss Harris and Major Henry R. Rathbone. The play stopped and the orchestra went immediately into *Hail to the Chief*.

Again Mr. Sothern got possession of his audience with the amusing talk and antics of Lord Dundreary. Everyone was laughing. Suddenly the fatal shot, the swift, bloody struggle of Major Rathbone and the assassin, the latter's leap to the stage, dagger in hand, the cries of murder, the indescribable panic as the head of the great, beloved man fell forward. Everyone's heart was shaking as a dog shakes himself after a cold bath.

The little comedy of manners went out like a candle in the wind while one of the great tragedies of history took possession of the theater and began to rock the world with its overwhelming significance and pathos. The unfortunate people who were part of that terrible scene were like those overturned in a raging sea. Many were wrecked and broken by the sudden leap from laughter to appalling tragedy. The change had come with blinding swiftness. It was more than human nerves could endure.

Nearly everyone in the crowd was crazy and some never quite recovered their poise.

It was that vivid account of the scene in Nicolay and Hay's history—probably written by John Hay—that made it clear to me that Nicholas Goodall's nervous system had been broken down in that tragic ten minutes. This paragraph in the history suggests his great trial:

"Over all the rest the blackest fates hovered menacingly—fates from which a mother might pray that kindly death would save her children in their infancy."

He speaks of the accursed man fleeing in pain to die a dog's death and adds:

"The stricken wife was to pass the rest of her days in melancholy and madness; of the two lovers one was to slay the other and then end his life a raving maniac."

The hospitals and probably the asylums were overcrowded for a time after that. Goodall and his son Nicholas—both human beings of unusual sensitiveness—were of course nervously broken. It is likely that the father did not long survive the shock and that he left his son in an asylum from which he was discharged to become an inspired, penniless, and half-insane wanderer.

This tragic figure now lies in the cemetery of Watertown, New York, with a decent headstone above his grave. He died in the almshouse of that city in 1880. His violin was sold for enough to pay the cost of the plot, the burial, and the headstone. Mayor Bingham, of Watertown, sent the violin to me. It now lies behind glass in my living room. It is a plain-looking instrument in appearance, not at all like the beautiful Gaspar di Salo of Ole Bull, with scrolls carved by Cellini, its varnish seeming to set the wood ablaze on a brilliantly lighted stage.

Always the great Paganini was announced with these fine words:

"Paganini farà sentire il suo violino"—which implied that to him his violin had a personality.

This old instrument of Goodall's was able to put Patrick Gilmore and thousands of other people in mind of Paradise.

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## 20. THE BOORN MYSTERY<sup>1</sup>

THE BOORN MYSTERY was connected with that long beautiful valley north of the Adirondacks where I was born. To the old-time Vermonters, "going west" meant going to the St. Lawrence Valley in upper New York or to that of the Genesee. In the first twenty-five years of the nineteenth century many of them fared away to my country. There everyone's grandparents were telling the strange story of Stephen and Jesse Boorn and Russell Colvin. This talk was stimulated by the fact that the main character in the mystery was living in northern New York at the time of his arrest. The story has puzzled the best legal minds. It presents a startling problem in psychology. Indeed, it involves the psychology of a generation of people as well as that of two men. The Boorn Mystery throws a powerful light on the mental condition of our pioneer folk before good schools had begun to lead them out of the hard way of superstition and ignorance into an understanding of their duty to themselves and their fellow men.

The first westward movement of old New England was toward the wilderness of Vermont. After the excitement of the Revolution had passed, a great change began in the wide, fertile, stumpy clearings of that wild region. The cabins were disappearing and the water power of the streams was soon flowing into saw, grist, and carding

<sup>1</sup> Those who may wish to study the details of this remarkable case will find them in its history carefully prepared for the Vermont Historical Society by Sherman Roberts Moulton—to which I am indebted for this outline of the strange story.

mills. Comfortable frame houses were built. Graduates of famous universities came to growing towns. Meeting-houses were erected but the farmer folk, the millmen, and the small merchants were mostly a crude people. These were they who had lived through the hell of the first pioneering and with almost no help from law or religion. That kind of man is almost sure to find his emphasis in profanity and his pleasure in drunkenness or worse self-indulgence. The club and the gun were likely to be his ministers of justice, and morality was a thing of which he had little knowledge.

Barney Boorn had a farm near Manchester. I gather that he was a man just coming out of this condition of pioneer simplicity. He was married—a step in the upward path—and Stephen and Jesse were his sons. Probably they had learned how to write their names but no doubt reading would have been a heavy task for them. Their sister, Sally, was married to Russell Colvin, a shiftless young man of no character who worked for his father-in-law by the day. He and Sally lived with Sally's father, Barney Boorn. Now and then Russell would have a row with the family and clear out. He would stay away for a week or two and then return.

It was known in the neighborhood that his brothers-in-law, Stephen and Jesse, hated and despised him. They resented the fact that he and his growing family lived in their father's home while they had "to work out," living no doubt where they were employed. The growing of Colvin's family worried them. It put an increasing tax on the Boorn property. Often they quarreled with Colvin.

Suddenly he disappeared. It was in the late spring of 1812. Weeks, months, and years passed but no news of the missing man came to that neighborhood. After some three years had gone by it became known that Sally was

with child. She was advised by a lawyer that she could not "swear the child on any man" until it was known that her husband was dead.

This event probably stimulated the gossip in the neighborhood, for many had the notion that Stephen and Jesse Boorn had murdered Colvin and concealed his body. The suspicion was then in the whispering stage. The two brothers were known to have been picking up stones with Colvin in a field on the day he disappeared. It was known also that they had had a violent quarrel that day. Moreover, people in the neighborhood had heard them say that Colvin had gone to hell—that they had put him "where potatoes would not freeze." It was known, too, that Stephen had often expressed the wish that both Colvin and his sister were dead.

In time a log heap on the Boorn farm was mysteriously set afire and destroyed and in 1819, when all the gossip had begun to travel in the loud voice of conviction, one of the Boorn barns got afire and was soon turned into ashes. It was then thought that Colvin's body had been concealed either in the log heap or in the barn. A man had found an old hat, so decayed that it easily fell to pieces, near the place where Colvin was last seen. He had always worn his hat when he went away.

Stephen knew that he was suspected of being the murderer of the missing man. He answered certain people with these reasonable words: "We did say that we had put him where potatoes would not freeze but we would never have said that if we had really killed him."

In 1817 Stephen moved to northern New York with his family, Jesse remained near his old home.

In 1819 a curious event turned conviction into certainty. Amos Boorn—a relative of Stephen—said to be a man of good character, set the countryside afire with a

remarkable dream. In his dream Russell Colvin had come to his bedside and told him that he had been murdered. That his body had been concealed in an old cellar hole where a house had once stood. Twice the specter had returned, urging action. The dreamer was impressed but not more than were the simple folk who heard him tell the story. To them and probably to Amos it was a divine revelation.

The cellar hole, then filled with leaves and earth, was excavated. A button, three rusted pocketknives, and some broken crockery were discovered. A jackknife and the button were shown to Sally. The dirt being scraped from the button, it was found to be of a brown color and to have the shape of a flower on its face. The knife and the button she quickly identified as those of her husband. The people and even the minister were now sure that God had come into the case and was helping to clear up the mystery. Many saw the power of divinity in another singular event.

A small boy, when near the house of Barney Boorn, saw his dog rush to an old hollow stump and begin digging at its base so intently that he could not be called away. Soon he returned to the boy and stood whining with his forefoot on the boy's legs. Then he rushed back to his digging. The men and women of that countryside gave a deep significance to the passionate whining and the unappeasable energy of the dog. The boy watched the canine excavator and found that a number of bones and two toe and thumb nails were unearthed. Had they been removed from the ruins of the burnt barn and buried under the stump?

The Reverend Mr. Haynes in the meetinghouse publicly declared that this looked like divine revelation. A court of inquiry began to investigate. Three physicians



declared that the bones had been part of a human foot. One physician disagreed with the others, but all were of the opinion that the toenails had been those of a man. They, in connection with the jackknife, the button, the hat, and the statements of Stephen, satisfied the minds of many people. A court of inquiry began to consider the evidence.

The inquiry went on for days but the inquirers were not satisfied with the evidence and nothing would have come of it save for one singular fact. Jesse Boorn shook with agitation when he saw the jackknife and in a voice that trembled confessed his belief that Russell Colvin had been murdered by his brother Stephen, that Stephen had even confessed to him that he had hit Colvin on the back of the head with a club and broken his skull.

Jesse was put in jail and constables were sent to Lewis County in northern New York to arrest and bring Stephen to Manchester. The man was brought back in chains. Having seen Stephen, Jesse confessed that his story had been false. But his recanting was not believed. The two brothers were thrust into jail with irons on them to await the action of the grand jury. They spent the hot summer in chains and in a darkened room. The minister and many others came to them and urged them to confess. They were depressed and fearful but stoutly asserted their innocence.

Late in August Stephen sent word to the judges and the state's attorney that he wished to see them. They came to the jail and in their presence Stephen wrote a full confession of the murder, done in a violent quarrel. He told in detail how he had concealed the body for a time and later dug a grave in which it was put.

In September, 1819, the two brothers were indicted and some time later the court convened to try them in

the Congregational Church, that being the only edifice in town which could accommodate the excited community.

The dignified Dudley Chase, graduate of Dartmouth, ex-United States senator and uncle of Salmon P. Chase, of Lincoln's Cabinet, presided. Judge Joel Doolittle, a graduate of Yale, sat with him. The state's attorney was a graduate of Middlebury College and the lawyer for the defense had been educated at the well-known Litchfield Law School. It was an able court.

Some new and important evidence was presented. Jesse under the influence, it would appear, of a supernatural visitor had made a new confession as to Stephen's guilt and the concealment of the body to a fellow prisoner in the jail. Under the law the accused could not testify in their own behalf nor was the *corpus delicti* necessary. The young men had no chance to deny their confessions and they were convicted.

Stephen was sentenced to be hanged in January and Jesse to prison for life.

The mystery now begins.

Before the date of execution arrived, an article in a New York newspaper led to the discovery of the fact that Russell Colvin, partially deranged, was alive in Monmouth County, New Jersey, and was working for one William Polhemus in the town of Dover. This man was brought back to Manchester and perfectly identified as Russell Colvin.

The mystery lies in the confessions that suggest these queries:

Is it possible for an innocent man, of a somewhat inferior intellect, under suffering and great pressure to be convinced that he is guilty of a crime?

Did Stephen hope that his confession of murder in a

quarrel would enable him to avoid a penalty more severe than that of manslaughter?

And how may one account for Jesse's confession in which he tells of seeing the murder and of helping to carry the body to the old cellar—an account so detailed and convincing that the carefully chosen jury of intelligent, unbiased men seems to have believed it?

Do suffering and persistent pressure bring about a derangement of the mental functions and the illusions of insanity—illusions that create reasonable details as to a murder and the effort to conceal it?

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## 21. FOUND TREASURE

### *In the Uncovering of an Old and Beautiful Romance*

SHARD VILLA—how many rays of memory shine down upon me through the sixty years since I shared its hospitality! It was a big, square, stone mansion on the old road from Middlebury to Brandon in Vermont. Under the turret of its front tower was a white stone on which the words Shard Villa had been cut. The words and the estate were the final chapter of one of the great romances of history, which had its beginning far back in the eighteenth century. Of this fact I was entirely ignorant while I lived there—a boy in my seventeenth year—as teacher of the two children of the master and mistress of the mansion, Mr. and Mrs. Columbus Smith.

These dear people are long since gone, root and branch, and a time has come when I can tell their story. They had two children—a boy eleven years of age and a girl just beginning her tenth year. They were a lively, beautiful pair.

In all the world I think that there was not another man like Columbus Smith or another estate like his. He was the most picturesque figure of a man that ever stood before me—stout and of medium stature, thick hair, white as snow, eyes and eyebrows black. As I remember him there was not a wrinkle in his big, ruddy, smooth, serious face. In it was the expression of an indomitable will. One may almost say it was a will that had done impossible things.

In the house he wore a short coat of brown doeskin, a

figured-silk waistcoat, across the front of which ran the clasped and tripled lengths of a gold watch chain with a large fob hanging in the line of the buttons. This chain was left to me and is now in my safe. His lips were rather tightly closed. He said little and when he spoke he scarcely seemed to open his mouth. In deliberating he would take a silver snuffbox from his waistcoat pocket, tap its side, open it, and inhale a pinch of snuff and then express a brief opinion. If his neighbor, John Dyer, was under discussion, his opinion would be distinctly unfavorable.

He said little. He had no intimate friends, no enthusiasms, probably because he had been, for many years, the slave of a great, absorbing task. In the midst of the crowds of London he had been a man apart and alone. I think that he had some sense of humor crushed and disabled by years of serious work.

Mr. Smith had made a large fortune, after many years of practice in the British Court of Claims, and had returned to his native heath. There he had bought a large acreage and built his mansion with a great turreted gray-stone wall enclosing the ample grounds of the villa. He had tenant houses and his life was fashioned after that of the English squire. Yet he had not been able entirely to put aside the old Yankee thrift and simplicity inherited from his fathers. Horses and hounds were not for him. When he went to his bank in Brandon he sat in a plain, side-spring buggy behind a farm horse and did his own driving. Mrs. Smith, with the aid of one of the many hired men, would see that this buggy was kept clean, and I remember once she bossed the painting of it.

They were both as innocent of any knowledge of art as the most ignorant denizen of the mountain country that fronted the villa. They had brought from Italy an artist to decorate the walls of the mansion. He had covered

them with vivid colors. I think that a good country sign painter could have done a better job.

One of my first tasks at the villa was a rather trying one. The old Scotch gardener had not come to breakfast. Mr. Smith had tried the door of his little house on the grounds and found it locked inside. He had called and got no answer. I was young and supple. He had succeeded in opening a narrow window that led to the cellar. I crawled through it, jumped to the cellar bottom and climbed two flights and found the old man helpless on the floor. He had had a stroke and was near his end. I looked at him lying in the dim, melancholy light that sifted through the blue-paned window and hurried down the stairway and opened the front door.

After the big mansion was finished Mr. Smith gave to the estate a grim and singular token of his unique character. I almost shudder when I think of it, for the thing seems to have tempted fate and to have put a curse on him and his descendants.

He built a handsome gray-stone mausoleum on the grounds near the big house for himself and his family. It would seem that he wished to be reminded every day of the inevitable end of life.

Both he and his wife seemed to enjoy living. Governors, generals, senators, bishops, and college presidents came to enjoy the hospitality of the villa. At commencement time, the faculty and graduating class of Middlebury were entertained there.

The mansion could not have had a more delightful setting with green mountain peaks some five miles in front of it and a beautiful valley between.

I went home to begin my college course. Five years had passed and I was at work in New York when a letter informed me that the mausoleum had got its first vic-

tim. At sixteen the boy William, who had grown to be more than six feet tall, had died of meningitis.

In the middle of the next summer I rode on my bicycle from New York to Shard Villa. It was the first of many visits after my leaving there. Smith had aged rapidly. The loss of his son, who was the main hope of his life, had softened the granite nature of the man.

They were glad to see me. I connected them with a dear and happy past. Mary, familiarly called Pinky, was a beautiful girl in her sixteenth year. The old gentleman was kind and thoughtful of my comfort, but silent. He said little to anyone. Mrs. Smith liked to talk of the beloved son who had left them.

The servants were growing gray. They seemed to feel the deep, cold shadow that had fallen upon the house. Mr. Ranney, the farm superintendent, was now a rather feeble, old man but still on duty. What a curious conservatism in the master and mistress of the villa! There were no changes in its working force. A faithful servant was never cast out. They were like members of the family. They had a pride in the name and fame of Columbus Smith and in the grandeur of his person and estate.

I spent three days at the villa and when I was leaving Mr. Smith said to me: "I shall be coming to New York soon and will see you there."

A year passed. It was midsummer again when a letter informed me that he would be at the Grand Union Hotel on a certain day, where at six o'clock in the evening he would be glad to see me. I found him there. He had recovered his composure and was more communicative than I had ever known him to be. I was a man now—not a boy.

On the Park Avenue side of the hotel there were armchairs near the wall where guests could sit in the eve-

ning, when the sun was low, and enjoy the cool open air a few feet back of the sidewalk. After dinner we went there and as the shadows of the night fell upon us he told me the strange story of his life. He also loaned me a manuscript record of it on which he had been working for some time. I observed that many of the words were misspelled. He was one of those shrewd, mathematical Yankees with a small gift for the architecture of words. He had graduated from the law school of Middlebury College early in the 1820s. I am not able to recall the year. This is the story:

### THE MAID OF THE BLACK HORSE

The year was about 1740. The Black Horse Tavern was a popular inn near Trenton, New Jersey, owned and kept by a Scotchman named William Rutherford. He had a pretty daughter, Frances Mary, who served in the dining room as a waitress. Her charm and beauty were a subject of talk in the countryside and among the guests of the inn. She was a well-formed, sweet-faced girl, with manners better than her station in life. For that reason, no doubt, she began to be called Lady Frances.

One summer day along came a grand coach and four horses from Philadelphia. Its owner was young Lord Fortescue, who was driving about with his grooms and footmen to see the country. His lordship came in to dinner while the horses were being stabled. A noble guest like that would be sure to have the comeliest maid in the dining room. Frances Mary waited on him. The young Irish lord was impressed by her beauty, for he came again and again to the inn for dinner. There can be no doubt that he was falling in love with the sweet-faced, shapely, well-mannered girl. He was probably a good-looking young



fellow, and no doubt Frances Mary was proud of his attentions and naturally pleased by them.

Her father, the dour old Scotch Presbyterian, was not pleased and he was right. He knew that no good would be likely to come of it. The young man was a playboy fond of the flowing bowl. His lordship was informed that he would no longer be welcome at the inn. It is probable that the attachment had gone further than the innkeeper suspected. Suddenly Frances Mary was missing. Soon a letter came announcing that she had eloped with the young lord and that they were to be married. It is likely that her father had answered this letter and what he may have said no one knows. The subsequent behavior of Frances Mary would clearly indicate that bitter words had passed between them. The Scotch religionist of that time had a stern character.

Frances Mary never saw him again. The two elopers were married and, as man and wife, they returned to the ancestral home of the Fortescues in Ireland, where no gentle welcome awaited them.

What? His son married to the daughter of an innkeeper? It was an outrage and a disgrace! The spirit of the eighteenth century began to stride the floor as it had done at the Black Horse Tavern. Was not pride a bigger thing than charity? Fathers were kings in that time. This one banished his son. He could have an income ample for his needs as long as he kept out of Ireland. If he ever dared to come back to his native land he would be cut off and his income would stop.

So it happened that the young lord and lady were packed off to the Continent in disgrace—a homeless pair. They traveled from city to city. Of where they went and of what adventures came to them until they reached Paris, Mr. Smith had no knowledge. It was probable that the

young man had tried to find solace for his banishment in drink.

He would seem to have been in bad health, for soon he died in the capital of France. The girl was childless and still comely. No doubt the old lord in Ireland continued to send money to keep her comfortable in the gay city.

She made friends in the English colony and seems never to have had a thought of returning to her old home. Her humble work at the inn was then a thing far behind her. The Rutherfords would seem to have been cut out of her life.

Among her friends in Paris was a wealthy Englishman named William Shard. The word "wealth" had a different meaning then. Fifty thousand pounds was a large fortune in the eighteenth century. Shard—a man considerably older than Frances Mary—had an ancestral estate at Paignton in England.

The second romance in this remarkable bit of history began. Shard fell in love with Frances Mary. The Scotch girl had acquired some wisdom. She wanted to know all about him, and the reports were favorable. They were married and went to live in Paignton. It was the old baronial life that she lived there and Frances Mary became the Lady Bountiful of that countryside.

"That is all I can say of her life at the country house in Paignton," said Smith. "The time is far back in the past. I only know that William Shard died leaving Frances Mary childless and a woman beyond middle age. She did not marry again. She made no will. There were no heirs. She loved England and was quite content to have her property go to the crown. She died intestate.

"When I left Middlebury College I began my practice. A certain case took me to England where I learned

that many estates had gone to the crown. A few years after my return, I fell in with a great-grandson of William Rutherford of the old Black Horse Tavern. A number of great-grandchildren were living. The story of Frances Mary had been handed down to them. One of the family had learned of the death of the young lord in Paris and of her marriage to a wealthy Englishman of the name of Shard. The story had passed many lips in Paris. I presume someone had brought it to Philadelphia and then to the Black Horse Tavern. It was a fragment of family history going from mother to daughter and from father to son. Naturally, they had some pride in passing it on. I went to England and learned the main facts in the story: that young Lady Fortescue, whose name was Frances Mary, had married William Shard in Paris, and that her fortune had gone to the crown.

"My troubles had just begun. I had to prove that Frances Mary Shard was the daughter of William Rutherford and that my clients were as they claimed to be—his descendants. Was it possible? Were the records still in existence? There was the main trouble.

"I returned to America and went to Trenton. Some years before a new county clerk's office had been built. The old stone structure had only one room. They had thought of burning the records so ancient that they were unlikely to be of service to anyone. Some were for keeping them, so they were dumped on the tiled floor of the deserted building. The door was locked and there they had lain for many years. I could, if I wished, go to the old clerk's office and in that big stack of ancient rubbish try to find the records I desired. I went there. The heap was as high as my shoulders, sloping like a hill to the floor.

"Here was a task like looking for a needle in a haystack. I worked there for weeks and my patience was

rewarded, for I found a will of William Rutherford in which he had mentioned his daughter 'Frances Mary, wife of Lord Fortescue,' and his two sons from whom my clients were descended. This was a lucky find. I discovered deeds of the old tavernkeeper which increased my evidence.

"In the parish records were the birth certificates. Convinced, and, as I thought, prepared for my battle, I went to England and opened my case in the Court of Claims. I had a fight that lasted ten years. They would baffle me with new demands. I would go back to America and return with their demands satisfied. They turned my hair white with opposition and delay. The end of it came when the Queen's Bench gave me a verdict for forty-five thousand pounds with interest for ninety years. Shard Villa is a monument to that verdict."

So this iron son of the Green Mountain country, with the will of Agamemnon at the gates of Troy, had established high credit in the most difficult court in the world.

"Yes, I won other cases there," he went on. "I had learned how to do that work and had good credit with the court. One case I shall never forget. I had got twenty thousand pounds for a poor cobbler who lived in a country town in Michigan. I found him at work on his bench. When I told him that I had fifty thousand dollars for him he rose to his feet, took a step toward me and fell into a broad tub of water that stood near his bench. Vertigo was the result of his excitement. I found it difficult to make him understand just what had happened.

"'What will I do with that money?' he asked.

"'Come with me and we will put it in the bank,' I said. 'The banker will advise you what to do with it.'"

"One case turned out rather badly. It was that of a woman who stood before me twisting her handkerchief

as I told her the news. In a minute her mind had lost its balance and she was never able to recover it. I have observed that sudden wealth is almost sure to be a misfortune."

Well into the night I sat there listening to this magician who had the art of turning poverty into wealth. For the last time I shook his hand.

The next winter I met Pinky in the home of General Veezy in Washington. She was a tall, shapely, beautiful girl, with dark eyes and hair.

When I went again to Shard Villa, the mausoleum held another victim. Pinky had been married to a young naval officer who in two years had become a crazy drunkard and killed himself. Brokenhearted, Pinky had returned to her home ill with tuberculosis and had soon passed away.

The great Columbus Smith was now utterly broken down. The gift of speech had left him. He sat in a wheel chair and looked at me. They told him my name and he smiled. He tried to speak and a strange sound came from his throat. Rose and Marie, Mrs. Smith's two maids, were there, old and bent and gray.

That night I was awakened often by a weird cry ringing through the dark, empty spaces of the great house. It sank into a deep, leonine roar. I was to learn in the morning that it was the voice of the master trying to speak. How plainly it told me of the vain hopes and glories of this little world of ours.

Soon after I went away, he, too, was taken to the mausoleum. I returned to give the dear woman what comfort I could. We sat long by that lonely fireside talking of the great days of old when the merry voices of the children were there. I have never known a braver soul

than was in this woman—one of the Joneses of old Claremont. When I was leaving her she gave me the portrait of Milton by Vandyke, hanging in the parlor. In 1829 Mr. Smith had bought it in a London auction room. It seems to be the portrait described by Charles Lamb in a letter to Wordsworth.

One paragraph in Columbus Smith's will ought to be mentioned. There is a little gleam of humor in it:

"I give to [here was the name of a man he disliked because of his conceit] a feather for his cap."

The mausoleum has long since completed its task and Shard Villa still stands—now a home for aged people.

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## 22. THE BIG MYSTERY

I LIKE the chimney corner and the warmth of the fire when the day is gone. I like the day and its work, but I like better the end of it and the sense that I have made good use of its light when darkness falls and when the blustering winds outside make the room an isle of stillness in the night. I like to tell this story in the chimney corner to friends who can feel the bigness of it. I call it as good a story as ever drifted to my beach.

Carlyle said of Tennyson that he was the best man in England to smoke a pipe with. I can imagine what a companion the great poet would have been with his imagination, his deep voice, and his pipe going. That is the kind of man who could have done something with this story.

Back in my newspaper days a singular character came to New York. I will call him Peter LaLone. I do not give his real name because no doubt members of his family are still living. It was a distinguished family. He was a musician. He had good manners and dressed like a gentleman. It is likely that he brought with him a letter to Elmer Chickering, whose store was on Fifth Avenue and who made the well-known Chickering piano. Anyhow, he and the pianomaker were by and by on friendly terms. The stranger made it clear that he was in need of money. He did not beg or borrow. But he must find a way to earn a living. He knew good music. He had some skill in the technique of piano playing. No doubt Chickering gave him an introduction to the manager of the *Mail and*

*Express*. For that newspaper LaLone began to write critical reviews of orchestral and operatic performances. The demand for musical criticism is as limited as the number of those who read it. On the press it is known as a "high-brow" job. Many learned specialists are seeking it. Moreover, LaLone was irritable and difficult. He was not long on the pay roll of the *Mail and Express*.

One day he called at the office of Mr. Chickering, carrying a large package wrapped in brown paper and tied with a string. It was burdensome. He wanted to get rid of it. In that troublesome package was the great mystery of a life. He asked Mr. Chickering if he would kindly put the package in his big safe. LaLone had some errands to do. He would call and get it soon. Chickering wrote the name of his new friend on the package and put it away in his safe. LaLone left him. He took the dark road that is in this world and yet apart from it—the road of ghosts and of living dead men.

Chickering did not see him again alive. There were those who got a glimpse of him now and then. Signs of extreme poverty were on his person. He was shabby and unclean. He shivered in the bitter winds of winter without an overcoat. He lived in a squalid attic room in a street of faded respectability. It was the last lodging on the edge of the world where one waits for the ferry. He was a forgotten man, alone with his God and his problem. He lived alone; he died alone. Yet he was a member of a well-known and aristocratic family—a gentleman who knew and valued the comforts of life.

He had been dead three days before his body was discovered. A brief account of the discovery was printed in the newspapers. It was only a few lines, for nobody knew that a great soul had passed. Chickering read the item. Then he thought of that package which for eleven



years had been lying uncalled-for in his safe. He went to the great steel box. There it lay. He had seen it often. Sure that LaLone would be coming to get it someday, he had allowed it to remain in the corner it had long occupied. He now brought it to his desk, dusted it, and untied the string. To his amazement the package contained nothing but bank bills—a moldy mass of money—pounds and pounds of it—\$1,000 bills, \$500 bills, and many smaller ones. It was a startling discovery. Chickering locked the door. He reeled with vertigo.

What secret had been hidden in the heart which loved music and on which the silence of death had fallen? LaLone! The poor, worried man, struggling to earn his daily bread with great riches in his possession! What was the meaning of this and what was to be done about it?

He wrapped the package, tied it up carefully, and put it back in the safe. He sent for my friend Judge Swift, then a lawyer practicing in the city courts. Through him I became familiar with the details and background of this unusual case.

He came to Chickering's office. Together they counted the heap of moldy bank bills. The amount was about \$450,000. Some of the bills had been issued by banks long out of business. They searched the room of the dead man. In an old hair-covered trunk under his bed they also found a few thousand dollars.

The discoveries were immediately reported, and an account of them was published in the newspapers. It was an event strange and remarkable, even in New York. The press made much of it. The verdict was naturally the easy, palpable solution of the mystery—namely, a miser had come to his end. In New York one sensation crowds upon the heels of another and pushes it out of the way.

I, like others who watched the hurrying caravan of events, accepted the easy verdict on the lone musician.

Suddenly a forged will came along. Certain men of questionable standing laid claim to the moldy heap of cash under a will ostensibly signed by the man LaLone. There was no conclusive evidence that he had ever known them. So it happened that Swift began a contest in behalf of the next of kin for the possession of the money. The senior counsel in the case, one of the most powerful advocates I have known, was also a friend of mine. His efforts defeated the forgers. His name was Leslie W. Russell.

One night soon after that I was dining with the distinguished lawyer in New York. Now, lawyers concern themselves only with proved facts that lend support to their position. Motives that have no weight in the point at issue do not concern them. The distinguished man told me of learning that LaLone had held a position of responsibility in New England and that whispers of suspicion were in the air when he left his job. I was thrilled by this, for I felt sure that I had the key to the mystery.

LaLone was no miser. A man of artistic temperament is never a miser. If he had been a miser loving the possession of money and the joy of surveying it, why had he rid himself of that hoard of cash? If he loved money, why subject it to the peril of theft in another's man's safe and allow it to remain there for eleven years? Why did he not put it in a bank? The truth is that he feared and hated it. That money was accusing him, yelling at him day and night, urging the man to take his shame upon himself and be done with the matter. This he longed to do but could not. His pride, his obligations to those dear to him were in the way.

Those dear to him! It was chiefly of them he thought. Who were they? I do not know. There was some one of

them whom he could not bear to disgrace. It may have been his mother. He was hoping that she would die and open the way to restitution. So he could not burn the money, and meanwhile it was burning him. He could not bear the look of it. He tried to get away from it, but he must know where it was so that when the chance came it could be restored to its rightful owner. He could not induce himself to use a dollar of it. He would live by the work of his hands or starve and avoid the look of affluence. So he lived as would a poor man in humble quarters, giving suspicion no food to feed upon—isolated, alone, a creature not quite of this world.

This, I think, was the hell of Peter LaLone.

It was a part of the plot of my novel, *Darrel of the Blessed Isles*.

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## 23. MY FAMILY GHOST

My friends had called for the story of No Man's House. The room was dark except for the dim glow of the sinking firelight when I began. I could see only the shadowed forms and faces of those sitting around me. The semi-darkness and the sound of the wind in the chimney had suggested the story. As usual I assured those who had not heard it that the ghost was no illusion.

The ghost came the first night we entered this house. I seem to have provoked it by light and hasty words. This long, rambling structure was finished and furnished. Before the servants came we arrived late one afternoon to spend a night together in our new home and discuss our plans.

We walked from the station with some beer and a cold luncheon in a light suitcase. Near our gate were the cellar and tumbled walls of an old New England homestead.

I said to my wife: "That was a haunted house. I acquired the ghost with the property. It is a female ghost. For years she has had no decent accommodation. Only the near woods to walk in and nobody to be scared of her. She has been out of a job. Let's extend to her the hospitality of our new home. A neglected ghost is worse than none."

"A female ghost!" my wife exclaimed. "What do you mean?"

As we walked slowly through the woods I imagined

the story of that forlorn ghost and told it. In the libraries I had been studying the color of the colonial years and was rather glib with it. This is about as it ran:

In the pre-Revolutionary time there were two wealthy men who lived on the hill at Horseneck—now Greenwich. One was a merchant in the China trade who owned many ships. He had a lovely maiden daughter of the name of Mary. The other rich man was a lumber merchant. He had been signally honored by the king and was now his chief collector of revenues for the province. His oldest son, George—named for the King of England, was a handsome lad. He and Mary fell in love with each other and were engaged to be married. George wanted to be a planter. So his father bought for him this long strip of land facing the shore from Willow Run to Indian Head and built for his son the house whose cellar you have seen. The China merchant brought from the East a beautiful embroidered robe of silk which was to be his daughter's wedding garment.

Suddenly a great contention arose among the people over the king's taxes. The peace of every town was broken by seditious acts. The spirit of revolution was fed by the sternness of the king's officers. Everywhere two factions were engaged in a bitter strife—the Loyalists and the Revolutionists.

Naturally the families of George and Mary were opposed to each other. The rich China merchant paid oppressive taxes, the lumberman was a favorite of the king. These friends had a quarrel and thereafter they were enemies. So it came about that the engagement between George and Mary was broken.

It was a hard time for lovers. All high emotion was soured in the political ferment—all save Mary's. She lived

on with a broken heart. Soon the boy married a girl of his own political faith and went to live in the new house. The evening of the wedding Mary, dressed in her silken robe, drowned herself in the bay.

That night the young man and his bride were terrified by sounds the like of which they had not heard before—the sounds of rustling silk and stealthy footsteps in their room. They lit the candles. They could see no intruder. They looked in the closets and under the bed. They bolted the bedroom door. They put out the candles. Again those stealthy footsteps and the whisper of rustling silk so close to them that it seemed to brush the bedclothes. They could not sleep.

Night after night the ghost came. They left the place but the ghost did not move. It clung to the house on which the girl had set her heart. Other tenants came. Their sleep was murdered by the stealthy footsteps and the rustling silk. They moved away. The house got a bad name. It was called No Man's House because nobody would live under its roof. It fell into decay and became the resort of the owl and the bittern. People came far to look at this home of a celebrated mystery.

Now, that was the yarn I spun as we walked through the woods together. This part of my tale was invented. The rest of it is infernally true.

It was a clear, warm summer night. We went to bed early. Our sleeping room was on the west end of the house. Two French windows, at the end, opened on a balcony as yet unscreened. A quarter of a mile away, across an open meadow, through these windows we could see the big house of our nearest neighbor, Mr. Henry F. Shoemaker, a New York banker. A large window on the south overlooked the Sound and a planted ravine with a brook,

tarrying in fountain pools, on its short way to the bay shore.

My wife's bed was near the balcony, mine near the door from the hall. We went to sleep with doors and windows open and a delightful sense of the stillness of the summer night.

I had been asleep some time when I was suddenly awakened. I listened, trying to discover what sound had broken my sleep. Solemnly the great clock in the hall struck twelve. Then I heard stealthy footsteps on the rug beyond my bed and the rustle of silken garments. My heart began thumping. Great Scott! Here was a mystery—a psychological mystery. Was there really a ghost looking for a job on this property? I lifted my perspiring head and stared into the darkness. I could see nothing. But again I heard the stealthy footsteps and the rustling silk. What was I to do? Fortunately my wife was sound asleep. The ghost came to the side of my bed so close that I could feel its silken winding sheet flick against the bedclothes. I must do something. I had to get out of bed to reach the electric buttons. At the moment that was not to be thought of. I could not have done it. The ghost was walking, walking, walking in the black darkness. I hit upon an idea intended neither to aggravate the ghost nor to waken my wife, who was a nervous woman. I resorted to a whisper.

“Who's there?”

(At this point I utter a sudden piercing cry in imitation of the answer I got and everyone jumps nervously. Then I proceed.)

That whisper was a great mistake. Hell broke loose. If a flaming thunderbolt had hit the house, the result could not have been more alarming. The shriek of the

ghost was like an ax hitting the small of my back. I jumped free of the bed and fell heavily back upon it.

My wife awoke in a panic.

"Good Lord above! What made you yell so in your sleep?" she cried out, in a frightened voice.

It soothed me a little to have company.

"I didn't yell," I answered.

"For heaven's sake! Who did?"

"I don't know."

"Hadn't you better find out?"

Find out! Hell's bells! That was like a woman. I knew that my time had come. I had a reputation for courage in the family and I must either keep or drop it. I could hear my wife shivering. I began to get angry and when a man loses his temper he will do anything. He loses all discretion.

Someone ought to write on the power of anger as an agent in human affairs. It is the mainspring of valor. A man needs the help of "righteous indignation" to face death at the cannon's mouth. I was angry and so I forgot my prudence.

That damned ghost had made me trouble enough. I would have it out with her then and there. I threw the cover aside and leaped to the floor. I did not care what happened. I got to the wall where the electric buttons were but in my excitement I could not locate them. I was feeling with both hands when my wife cried out:

"I hear stealthy footsteps and the rustle of silk. Turn on the light. Turn on the light!"

That made it so much easier for me! Frantically I explored the surface of that wall. Soon I found the buttons and up came the light. We could see no ghost, but as our eyes searched the room in silence I heard those stealthy footsteps in the hall outside the door. I pushed



the button that lighted the hall and, quivering in a sort of chill, stepped through its open doorway. There about ten feet before me stood the ghost. Its silken robe hit the wall and rug, rustling loudly as it whirled to face me. It was a big peacock with a long, plumed tail.

I learned next day that the large peacock herd of my nearest neighbor had got the habit of roosting in and upon the house every night while it was being built. This bird had come over with his mates, flown to the balcony, and entered our room.

It resented my whispered query and, startled by it, had shattered the silence with that piercing cry.



PART V  
ON THE CREST



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## 24. THE EVE SCANDAL

IN the village where I spent the most of my boyhood, far up the street beyond our home, a certain rich man lived in a little house. I will call him Eliphalet Baynes. He was an old man. Almost every day we saw him passing. He had many grudges and often if any of us were in the dooryard he would stop to speak of some rascal that he knew. "Thank God my soul is saved," he would add and then he would rush along in an odd kind of canter. It reminded me of the curious antics of my boyhood when I tried to imagine that I was a horse. He was gray-headed, nearly toothless, and vain of his strength. That canter was his way of displaying it. He had a wife but I think that no one, except her husband, ever saw her. She was a mystery in that neighborhood. After many years I solved the mystery and I propose to tell here how it was done. I had to go back to the Garden of Eden to do it. How strange that the ancient story of the fall of man should be connected with a story in my own neighborhood!

I find myself inclined to say that the greatest event of my time was the discovery of radium by Marie Curie. It is a statement which may well astonish those who read it. She drove a stake that marks the beginning of a new era in human history. In her strength of will and her understanding she demonstrated the rights of woman. It was a conclusive demonstration.

To justify my position I have to make a journey into the past and briefly present the story of woman. I got it

in many months of careful research. It is an astonishing story, and more astonishing even than the story itself is the fact that few people know anything about it. I gathered the items in my notebooks in chronological order. They had interested me for a reason which I now present.

When my young manhood began I had a sense of chivalry like that of a medieval knight. I would fight anyone at the drop of a hat for the least insult to a lady in my presence, and did once. I had gone into training with Jack Dempsey, the nonpareil, and was, I thought, a somewhat formidable person. I hated and despised the bovine man who couldn't forget his sex. I laugh at all that now and wonder how I managed to live through it.

Yet I know very well how this old-time chivalry got into me and why it stayed with me. It arose from my great friendship with that wise and gentle woman—my mother.

I remember hearing her say to a young man who was about to be married: "If you want her to be right you must be right yourself. She will want a hero and you must be it. If you can keep her love and respect you will be almost sure to fashion her life for her. However great and strong you may be she will try to keep up with you. The great desire of a woman is to keep up."

My sense of chivalry was rooted in my deep affection for this mother and for the girl whom I married when I was twenty-two years of age—Miss Anna Detmar Schultz. What an inspiration I found in her love and help and devotion!

So when I ran upon little items in the story of woman in dusty old histories they engaged my interest.

My purpose is not to disturb anyone's faith in the story of what occurred in the Garden of Eden, but only to indicate its tremendous effect upon human history.

If it were fiction it would be universally condemned as incredible. The fully developed man of today would surely decide that God's act was wholly out of character—unjust to the man and the woman who were planned for doing exactly what they did. Moreover, the serpent's conversational powers would seem to have been misplaced. We know that the serpent never had the organs of speech.

Many good people believe that the story is the product of inspiration, and there is much to be said for a faith that can silence the intellect. The story is a part of the Bible and I yield to no man in my respect for that book. Perhaps I may be permitted to say that I have never felt any pride in Adam as an ancestor. He put the guilt on the woman and made a mess of human life for ages.

No one will question my right to say that a stationary thing in a world of change excites our curiosity. That old tree in the Garden of Eden has stood since there was any ground to stand on. It has flung the longest, blackest shadow this world has known. Most of the illustrious birds of poetry have sung in its branches.

Now this is what happened according to history well authenticated. Eve acquired in the first garden a Reputation which has followed her through all the ages with a club in its hands. On the unsupported evidence of one man, she was convicted of being the introducer of sin to this world and the prime cause of death and anxious toil. Whatever we may think of the verdict, it led to a condition as to the reality of which there is overwhelming evidence. She practically ruined the human race and branded the foreheads of her daughters with the scarlet letter of disgrace.

There is no question as to the effect of that story in the third chapter of Genesis upon human history. Take,

for instance, the rib theory of the origin of Eve, according to which an unimportant part of the body of Adam was converted into a woman. This, naturally, gave her an inferior social standing. From believing it herself she acquired the complex of inferiority. She got the habit of accepting whatever came as her proper portion. It was her reputation as the deviser of sin and the cause of all the woes of man that kept her down near the donkey level.

He who has been to Egypt or Palestine and has seen a little donkey struggling under a heavy burden on top of which sits a big, husky Mohammedan with a busy leather whip in his hand, has seen a picture not unlike that of man and woman in the ancient world. He had no doubt that he was pleasing the Lord when he put her to the hardest tasks and struck her with a club or a lash.

It is easy to understand why, when the toil bore heavily upon him and bread was hard to get, he should feel like beating his wife—for had not woman brought these troubles upon him? When she pleaded for mercy he was often deaf because he remembered what Adam got when he hearkened to his wife.

Man had to believe that woman was the cause of all his woes, and he kept her in mind of her responsibility. All through the deep valley of unnumbered ages he held a grudge against her. Whether the old story be truth or fiction, there is no fiction in the woes of woman which came as the fruit of it. That is the most shameful and well-authenticated chapter in all history.

Man wore his hands and racked his body with toil, but his brain suffered ages of enforced idleness. His brow was always wet, but there was never any perspiration on his intellect. The state told him what he had to believe. If an individual did any independent thinking—as the



prophets were wont to do—he got his head cut off. It didn't pay and there were few who indulged in that unholy pastime.

Individuality might be popular for a time, but it was unprofitable. A head raised above the dead level of the crowd soon fell into the basket, and except for a memory of what had passed between the dead lips, it was out of business. How remote and impossible this kind of thing would seem to be! It is strange that there are still descendants of the nomad tribesmen, who lived thousands of years before Christ and are now wandering under the same sun that delayed its flight over Ajalon. There are thousands of them in America who would slay the prophets, but for the fact that it has now become a dangerous form of recreation.

The Mohammedans retain the controlled intellect and the ancient grudge against woman, still a slave whose face may be seen only by her own family. They continue to slay the prophets.

Of old, woman did not choose—she was chosen. She was simply an animated rib bone—one of many wives, concubines, slaves in the caravan. Divorce was a privilege of the husband only. A woman suspected of adultery was tried by the ordeal of bitter water to see how she stood it. The water was embittered by the sweepings of the floor of the tabernacle. It was a poisonous, deadly ordeal. The inference I get from the sixth chapter of Numbers is this: if she began to rot with fever, she was guilty. Woman was completely dependent. An inscription on a tablet in ancient Babylon says that a woman who gads about and neglects her house and belittles her husband shall be thrown into water. The man who gadded about and belittled his wife was only doing his duty.

Now, certain critics say that the story of the fall came from Babylon.

It is obvious that a woman had no right to resent rough treatment. She had to stay at home and bend to the task and keep her mouth shut.

In the *Apostles* of Renan—a man who studied history with unusual ardor—we find that among the Hebrews “woman’s childhood ended at twelve and her old age began at twenty-four and marriage was slavery,” until a new and a great teacher had begun to change the spirit of man. I present in direct quotation a summary of Renan’s observations:

“Women were naturally attracted, their position in society being humble and precarious, to a Christian community which offered them protection. Widows especially had had few rights which anyone respected. Many were opposed to giving them religious instruction. The Talmud spoke of the gossiping and inquisitive widow as a pest of mankind. The new religion offered them sure and honorable asylum. The nuns and the sisters of charity were one of the first creations of the church, and the word ‘widow’ became a synonym for one devoted to religious work.”

The historian, who was himself a skeptic, declares: “Woman never had a religious conscience, a moral individuality or an opinion of her own previous to Christianity.”

It would appear that this new faith, near the centers of its power, had begun to mitigate the curse.

In about thirty-five years after their great Champion had given up his life we begin to learn of notable women. In certain of them St. Paul had discovered great qualities. There was a deaconess of the name of Phoebe who lived at the port of Corinth of whom he wrote: “She is a suc-

corer of many and of mine own self." It is evident that Paul esteemed her highly.

He trusted other women with important work, notably Priscilla. There were these also who won more or less distinction in the work of the church: Damaris of Athens, Chloe of Corinth, Mary, Tryphena, Persis and Tryphosa of Rome, and Appia of Colossae. Doubtless these women were friends of the great Apostle, but his approval was qualified. In all assemblies they were to hold their tongues. Why? Had not the first of their sex used her tongue to talk with a serpent? Still, for many years after Christ had left the world, Roman women were still in the shadow of the ancient curse. In the *Clementine Homilies* it is expressly declared that woman was naturally inferior to man.

Tertullian—A.D. 160—addressed these words to a number of women: "Woman, thou shouldst always be dressed in mourning and in rags. Thou shouldst offer to our eyes only a penitent drowned in tears. Thus shouldst thou pay ransom for thy fault in bringing the human race to ruin. Thou art the gate by which the Demon enters."

In the first three centuries many of the disabilities of women under the law were removed. The adoption of females was first permitted by a Decree of Diocletian in 291. Claudius made it possible for her to make a will and a contract. She had become almost a human being.

Before the time of St. Jerome woman had acquired some skill in climbing the social ladder. She could indulge in a degree of dalliance without being drowned like a superfluous cat. Christian women were no longer content with the beauty of the spirit. They bathed in scented water. They were mostly patricians, and they clung to youth with paint and powder and were inclined to over-emphasize their charms. They wore silk and fine linen and

dainty slippers. The letters of the good St. Jerome—a learned man and a great phrasemaker—to Paulina and others lay down some illuminating rules of etiquette and behavior for women. The flash of his stinging periods gives us a bright light on social conditions in the Eternal City at that time. He writes, in A.D. 384:

“Let long-haired youths, dandified and wanton, never be seen under your roof. Repel a singer as you would some bane. Do not arrogate to yourself a widow’s license and appear in public preceded by a host of eunuchs.”

It would seem that it was bad form for a widow to have any man, except a eunuch, in her service, and that singers were not to be trusted.

Again he writes:

“And do not out of affectation follow the sickly tastes of married ladies who now pressing their teeth together, now keeping them apart, speak with a lisp and purposely clip their words because they fancy that to pronounce them naturally is a mark of country breeding.”

At last women had begun to take on a resemblance to certain of their modern sisters. He complains of women “with wardrobes crammed with dresses and who change their gowns from day to day.” He decries “the women who paint their eyes and lips and whose chalked faces are like those of idols. Upon their cheeks every chance tear leaves a furrow. They heap their heads with hair not their own.”

Here is a rare piece of general advice—as good now as it was then:

“Beware of itching ears and a blabbing tongue.”

Light on the manners of the old city may be found in this remark: “We, if our food is less appetizing than

usual, get sullen. If the water brought us is a little too warm we break the cup and overturn the table, and scourge the servant in fault until the blood comes."

These days that kind of rumpus in a Christian household would have resounding echoes. Yet Jerome speaks of this violent behavior as if it were a fashion of the time. We come now to a point on which this good man differs sharply from the modern view:

"Some content themselves with saying that a Christian virgin should not bathe along with eunuchs and married women. I wholly disapprove of baths for a virgin of full age. Such an one should blush and feel overcome at the idea of seeing herself undressed."

He recommends a "cold chastity," and in his view baths add fuel to a dangerous fire.

Among the sequestered tribes of the Far North women still suffered from the taint of Eve. The provinces were slow to remove the shackles of ancient custom. In the dark history of the northern peoples we get only flashes of light on the unhappy figure of woman. They are sufficient, however, to show her tragic part in the drama of life. The missionaries were at work there in the North, telling the old story of woman's sin and the fall of man, and the better story of the great Forgiver and His atonement. She was dependent and under tutelage. When Canute reigned, a woman lost her nose and ears for adultery. I think it is true that there had been no law in England which provided punishment for men guilty of this offense.

Under Athelstan a female slave convicted of theft was burned alive by her sisters. Three times we learn in the ecclesiastical legislation of England that if a woman scourges her female slave to death she must do penance.

Woman had learned to use the lash from which she had suffered so long.

Under Ethelbert wives were sold. A law was enacted that if a man carry off a freeman's wife, the thief at his own expense must provide another wife for the aggrieved party. Under Magna Charta a woman could not accuse a man of murder unless he had killed her husband.

Thus it appears that it was the greatest of misfortunes to be born a woman. Is there any reason for it, save that of her enforced moral inferiority because she had inflicted sin and death and toil upon the world?

Bruised and trodden, like the serpent that shared her sin, can we wonder at the bitterness of her spirit when, bent and old, with clawlike hands and withered face, her tongue became the dread of her neighbors and her curse a forerunner of evil? Then the witch, and the witchfinder going up and down the roads of England and other lands with a divining rod in his hand—the burnings, the hangings, the drownings, the smotherings. What a strange and tragic history culminating in this horrid climax! Even in the seventeenth century Cotton Mather, of our own country, solemnly believed in witchcraft.

On February 1, 1549, Michelangelo wrote a letter to his nephew Leonardo, in which he said:

"Thou requirest someone who will be in subjection to thee and who will not desire to put on airs and go every day to parties and weddings, for where there are constant festivities it is easy for a woman to become a wanton."

Women were beginning to enjoy life, but Congreve speaks of the low estimation of women in Elizabeth's time as a reason for the small figure they make in Shakespeare's dialogues; Swift scorned them; Addison laughed at them

as half-witted, amusing creatures made only to be the playthings of man.

Until Victoria came to the throne of England its women—except those of wealth or of noble and royal blood—still labored under the ancient curse. Their ignorance astonishes the student of history. Certain Puritan women, stimulated by their interest in the Bible, had learned to read, but even when the nineteenth century began the ability to read was, it would seem, a rare achievement among women of small means. What but the condition of woman has maintained and still maintains in Europe a peasantry dwelling in thick darkness?

The nuns had demonstrated, as far back as the sixth century and especially in the ninth, that women were capable of intellectual development. Victoria decided that the time for a new deal had come. She and others aided Frederick Denison Maurice in the founding of Queen's College for Women in 1848. Soon after that their intellectual life began to have an effect upon the world.

Many of the women who came early to the colony of Massachusetts Bay were densely ignorant. It is surprising that for more than two centuries they remained in that condition. They were, I think, mainly a high-tempered lot, some of whom used the scourge too freely on the indentured females in their service. Their background had not been one to encourage a sweet and gracious temper.

From an essay in the *Atlantic Monthly* of February, 1859, I present an astonishing paragraph relating to the history of woman in the colony of Massachusetts Bay:

"It is well established by early deeds and documents that a large proportion [of the women] could not read or write and in Boston, especially, for one hundred and fifty years the public schools included boys only. After

1789 the girls were sent to school in the summer and not until 1828 were all distinctions wiped out in the Boston common schools."

When we consider how the character, standing, and power of woman has advanced since the founding of Queen's College in 1848, we can measure the loss that the world has suffered—now so apparent in the wisdom of Queen Victoria, in the work of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, George Eliot, Jane Austen, and Marie Curie.

Returning to the old village with this knowledge in my mind, I went to the house of Eliphalet Baynes. It is not my purpose to belittle his character. He was a church member and no doubt an honest man, a good part of whose life had been spent in the Old Testament.

It is a Sabbath Day. The chickens in the dooryard seem to step softly. The old cock has a solemn, religious look in his eye. The dog wags his tail hopefully, but in silence. There is a faint, sad whisper in the sheltering tree-tops. I feel the brooding spirit of the place. I enter the door. The Master sits in a gloomy, shabby room, an open Bible in his lap. He has been reading in the Old Testament. He does not arise and welcome me. He is in his Sunday clothes. He has a hairy, rough skin, a stern face, and keen gray eyes.

He owns a mortgage on many acres of the countryside. He quarreled with a man as to the ownership of an umbrella worth not more than fifty cents. For years the two have not spoken to each other. He has a sublime confidence in his mind. He boasts that he never changes it. He lives in the time of Abraham. His sole aim is to please the Lord. As to what his neighbors may think of him he has no concern whatever. A tall clock ticks its mournful warning. I get a glimpse of his wife through an open



door. She is bent with toil—a melancholy drudge who has never dared to have an opinion of her own.

Partly to test his generosity I speak of the beautiful cherries on the tree in his garden.

“Cherries!” he exclaims scornfully. “I am not thinking of cherries, sir. I am thinking of my immortal soul.”

I left with the impression that one may think too much of his immortal soul. One is always thinking of his liver when it ceases to do its duty. If this man were the King of America many heads would be falling into the basket.

At last the cloud of mystery that surrounded his wife had passed. Like her sisters of old, she had been a slave. Even late in the nineteenth century and in this enlightened land of ours the old story of the fall had been doing its work.

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## 25. ADVERTISING

AMERICANS have a special right to use the language of commerce. It is easily understood and with no apology I use it in this little piece.

One thing I seem to have learned in all this living I have done. It is the fact that there is an incalculable power in advertising.

The young arrive and are soon eager customers for the goods we have to offer. What do we advertise as stuff that is durable and worth the price? It is good to believe in honor and all high things, but we must also advertise their value in our talk and conduct or the young may not want them. I do not recommend that we turn our homes into Sunday schools. The job must be expertly done. Liver pills, tooth paste, and breakfast food are not so much in need of advertising as truth, honor, and virtue. Yet, these bigger things have been sadly neglected and the world of today is in desperate need of them. The young do not forget, and this kind of advertising is mainly for the young. No doubt there are some who inherit big things but most people must get what they have, and their guide is advertising.

Nearly forty years have passed since Joseph Pulitzer, one of the biggest and kindest men I have known, gave me a limited leave of absence from my desk and my good friends in the editorial rooms of the *World*. That leave has continued unto this day. I was near forty years of age when I turned my back upon success—if that word applies to a good job and a large and growing salary—to

take a strange, difficult, and unpromising road. Often it led to poverty and got one no further than the garret. I admit that it was a venturous undertaking.

Mr. Pulitzer is said to have remarked that I was a strong man with a hidden, unsuspected talent for idiocy. I soon discovered that he was right. But the money standard of success did not much appeal to me. I never knew how to use my intelligence in the presence of a large sum of money. It embarrassed me. We didn't get along well together. I could live peaceably with \$200 a week, but when a large sum jumped on me I didn't know what to do about it.

Anyhow, I awoke one morning and found my fear of poverty gone—everything swept away in a night. Kind friends came and wanted to know what they could do to help me. Among some of them I probably achieved a reputation as an idiot. One can get that without advertising. Still, I have always had a comfortable home and many good friends and have found joy in living.

I did well in newspaper work but was not quite satisfied. It was largely because when I was a boy certain things were advertised in my home and neighborhood. Good literature was one of them. It was a literature that confirmed the teaching of my home and of honored friends outside it. From them I had learned that character was the big thing. Dickens and Thackeray were ably advertising this truth. So was history. When one has acquired a reasonably good character, which is little more in a good neighborhood than a love for the things that have been well advertised in his presence, he will become its servant. He finds himself obeying imperative demands. One is that he discover a task which will give the fullest possible expression to the best there is in him. In the plain talk of commerce, he must find a chance to display and

advertise the goods he has acquired and sell them to other people. I began to see that advertising was a part of the big plan of life. At any rate, I was giving a lot of my time to very trivial stuff: a lady with forty lovers telling just why she had chosen one of them; the man who had made a million dollars in some ingenious manner. That was the kind of thing which had engaged my thought.

I felt that I could do better with a different kind of task. I thought that I had found it when I turned my back on a rather handsome kind of success. Probably I was wrong, but of this I am sure: I may have misjudged myself but not the good people who tried to make a man of me.

I would not have it understood that all the people in the old neighborhood were wise and above reproach. Some pretty bad advertising was done there.

I remember a distinguished man who did his drinking privately and often reeled in public. He would explain to his friends that he was troubled with vertigo while, in a breath, he advertised his lack of sobriety and veracity. One saw some interesting types of advertising in that village and countryside.

There were even poor men who sat in certain of the doorways of Main Street chewing tobacco and advertising their laziness and their love of leisure. How the people of that country despised the lazy man!

My friend Richard Eddy Sykes told me of a man who achieved fame with a single stroke of advertising. He had heard a minister describe the torments of the damned and then had said: "I don't believe that any man or woman will have to fry forever in hell. To begin with, there ain't no human constitution could stan' it."

That reminds me of a lot of advertising of immeasurable value to America that came along while I was a

young man. Whatever we may think about religion and its Ten Commandments, one fact is undeniable: When the pews are empty the prisons are full. We cannot live happily without truth, honor, good faith, and a respect for the rights of other people. About all the church does is to advertise the value of these things, and God knows the world was never so much in need of them. If there is any atheist in that kind of work, I have not heard of him. The church is the only big organized force that ably advertises this line of goods, and the price is within the reach of all. The man who gets possession of them, by any means, is a better citizen.

I propose to present here one or two old-fashioned ideas, aware that a time has come when it is dangerous to do it.

The time of my young manhood was distinguished by a good quality of citizenship. The church was a fighting machine. I remember when an indecent show appeared on the stage of a Brooklyn theater, Beecher, Talmage, and some leading citizens went to the mayor and the show was swept off the boards. Crime was not a serious problem. As one reason for it, I mention two great advertisers of the things that make for good citizenship.

Moody and Sankey were advertising human kindness, the good things related to it, and even bigger things. These men exercised a tremendous power in extending and establishing good citizenship. They reached the Gladys McKnights, the Dillingers, the Lucianos, and many of that ilk. I think that tens of thousands could testify to the correctness of this opinion.

More than any other nation, America depends on the good quality of its citizenship. Our democracy is nothing but an elaborate system of credit. It has to trust the average man. If his honor fails our democracy fails.

I remember an evening in Louisville, when I had nothing else to do, I went to hear Moody and Sankey. Curiosity impelled me, for I had little faith in their emotional appeal. I was amazed by what I saw and heard. There was no oratory, no shouting. Moody—intensely human—stood before an immense crowd and talked to it in a friendly, fatherly tone. In three minutes I said to myself, Here is a great human being who knows the world and any man would be the better for his friendship and his counsel.

It was more than fifty years ago and I can only try to tell what happened. It was about like this: He told a little story of a man in desperate despondency. He had gone wrong. No work, no friends, no desire to live. Money was the thing he craved and didn't care how he got it. He told of what he had said to the man and of what the man had said to him. No, he didn't mind being prayed for. He would try anything. Then the prayer so simple, so eloquent that ten thousand people were in tears. The words that followed had an immense effect:

"That man, now a respected and prosperous citizen, is on this platform."

Who wouldn't want to be prayed for by such a man as Moody? A curious, affectionate relation was established between himself and his audience. Every man and woman was made to feel that he was a brother eager to help. We must not forget that it is necessary to win the heart of the common folk before we can influence their minds and their conduct.

Moody has long since gone and there seems to have been no one equal to the great work that he did. More Moody's would have meant fewer bandits, fewer defalcations, fewer corrupt officials, fewer robbed and bankrupt cities. The advertising that he did has been sadly neglected in recent years. Is it because our colleges and universities

have been teaching us to look down upon that kind of thing?

Is it not true that in America the moral rectitude of the toiler is quite as important as the scholarship of the rich and the well-to-do? I am inclined to think that it is even more important.

We old fellows are a bit disturbed by what we see around us. We are told that honest frankness as to the truths of life is good for the soul. Does it not tend to prove to the lower half of the world that the upper half behaves like cats and dogs? Is there not some reason for this in their divorces, the books they read, the plays they patronize, and even in their general behavior?

For a time like this it is bad advertising with even a little danger in it, for it seems to have helped in causing the lower half to regard the upper half as its legitimate prey?

I am this kind of American. I think that the printing press, the parent, the play, and the professor should be advertising media for a sound democracy, and for the faith, honor, courage, strength, and virtue of a good citizen.

If any college or university is falling short of that in any particular, it is indeed a questionable asset.

In my youth the girls were small advertisers. They went in for scholarship and music and domestic economy. Those girls knew how to cook and to make an attractive home. They read the best literature and some of them were brilliant talkers. I knew one whose wit would keep the table in a roar. How often I have quoted her!

They liked the physical side of life. They knew the charm of a body artfully draped and loved to dance all night, but their advertising was mainly for things in the upper levels of the human body. There was no double-

column spread next to sensational matter, such as one may see now, especially at the bathing beaches. Just what are these girls advertising? It is not, on the whole, so good.

Still, the fact remains that all this is up to the boys. If their demand is for that kind of girl they will get it. Parents used to advertise to their young the home worth having—a happy home, like that they lived in, founded upon love and honor and good faith. Children came and a growing happiness was there. After all, what are we seeking but happiness?



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## 26. THE HEART OF THE WORLD

WHAT is the one big thing I have seen? It is the great love story of the winning of the heart of the world by speed and power. My work is nearly done and there are things that an old man would like to say to those coming to the great tasks of our democracy.

The gas engine can fling a thousand miles behind it in three hours. It laughs at the flying cloud and the laggard hurricane.

The first thing to be said is this: The hands on the clock still hold their pace. The growth of the tree and the man proceeds as slowly as ever. With countless universities and learned professors, the world has been trying to speed up the making of men. The effort has not been quite successful. The pace toward the full stature of manhood cannot be hurried.

Big men are not quite so plentiful even as they were in my boyhood when we had them in my little town.

One is awed by the mighty machines that hurl us through the heavens and dive, like leviathan, for hidden journeys under the sea. They are as cruel and destructive as they are wonderful. They have won the heart of the world, but are they also to break it?

Alarm is in the hearts of men. Are these machines to cut down the great tree of civilization whose uprooting might easily make this planet the home of silence and of death?

In many nations a kind of gasoline method has been

applied to the making of men and they suggest the above query.

Another kind of speed and power is breaking down the old barriers built by the blood and sweat of humanity toiling upward for two thousand years. It is the mighty stream of materialism flowing out of continental Europe, where dictators have come to power because of a lack of big men to head them off. They are backed by vast armies. Many of Europe's sociologists disavow reason in favor of the passions and the instincts.

"The essence of our minds," says the too-eminent Mueller Freienfels, "lies not in intellectual understanding but in its biological function as a means for the preservation of life."

He seems to speak for the Teutonic philosophy of our time represented by Freud, Weber, Scheler, Mannheim, Spengler, and Schmitt.

What a rallying around the generative organs! Why do we not walk on our hands so that our heads may be down near the dust where they belong?

Why do these gentlemen go to a university for that kind of stuff? I recall many who got it without trying and landed in jail. The prison is its natural home. These philosophers teach that the state is absolutely independent of all moral considerations save its own—a predatory creature capable of turning falsehood into truth and evil into righteousness.

They put it over with scholastic slang—"dynamic, concept, complex"—and it sounds profound. The dumb crowd with no understanding of it take it to be true. The truth is that this hired philosophy is about the shallowest, rottenest mess of rubbish the world has known—of a piece with putting the church in bondage and Jesus Christ in a strait-jacket.

Carl Schmitt, in his *Der Begriff des Politischen*, makes the state independent of moral codes. Can it be true that the state can do no wrong?

The much-read Oswald Spengler, in his *Jahre der Entscheidung*, says: "Man is a predatory animal. When I call man a predatory animal whom do I insult, man or the animal? For the great predatory animals are noble creatures of the most perfect kind without the duplicity of human morality founded on weakness."

So we learn that we are even beneath a cage of tigers or a herd of orangutans. And what predatory weaklings were Paul, Augustine, Dante, Shakespeare, Milton, Tennyson, Goethe, Schiller, Lincoln, Emerson, Sir Moses Montefiore, Rockefeller, and Carnegie, all so predatory that they gave their strength or a large part of their fortunes for the good of mankind.

Look at this cage of inferior animals and then form an opinion of Spengler and his followers to whom morality is mere pretension. There is one lesson Mr. Spengler should have learned from the beast that he admires.

As Johan Huizinga, the Dutch historian, has pointed out in his able book *In the Shadow of To-morrow*, animals fight only for peace or meat, never for the sake of fighting.

From Professor Huizinga we learn that on the installation of a new chair for Germany the Reich commissioner was thus reported:

"It is high time to have done with the ludicrous theory that anything less than the hard necessity of assuring the position of the State could determine what is and what is not justice. The earth belongs to the heroic not to the decadent."

There is a somewhat satanic note in that declaration. The question: to whom does the world belong? is one

in which America is vitally concerned. Could we hold our peace if it seemed likely to be deeded to Satan?

So we may well ask ourselves, are speed and power to be our masters or our servants?

I have spoken of the noisy shallows in the stream of life but there are vast stretches of deep water not much moved by them. Certain nations of Europe have been so tortured by war that their leaders have lost their mental poise.

There is that in the blood and spirit of man which, in the long range, will hold the ground he has gained—a wisdom, a divinity heard and felt in mighty voices when the need arises and the trumpets call on the slow, slow march of history.

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## 27. THE SUMMING UP

I BELONG to the time of John L. Sullivan and Lydia Pinkham. John hit above the belt and Lydia below it. John was an honest man. He did not demand or get a fortune for a fight. I never knew Lydia, but I am sure that she believed she was right. The world is in great need of honest fighting folk and honest advertising. The millennium is still in the imagination of the ancient prophets but no one has prophesied a hellennium. They had one in old Rome and it began with the exaltation of amusement. I sometimes fear that we may get in a like trend.

Jack Dempsey and Babe Ruth arrived riding on elephantine incomes. Mr. Dempsey's amounted to perhaps half a million a year. Mr. Ruth was not so fortunate. Still, he was doing well. His income was probably larger than that of some of the ablest lawyers in the United States. We used to read with deep interest of Mr. Evarts's triumphs in court and of Mr. Ingalls's wit in the Senate. Home runs in a court or the Senate chamber are now of secondary importance. Comparatively few people hear of them. For the first time, since the Circus Maximus in old Rome closed its gates, fun has seemed to be a little bigger than justice or the public welfare.

I can enjoy a good boxing match and I am a baseball fan. No doubt the crowd gets relief from the stress and strain of life in such scenes, but I wonder if it is quite wholesome for a great reward like that of half a million dollars to go to a fighter for an hour's work. It does violence to our sense of proportion. It puts the

physical man on a pedestal where he is a little out of place. Even a number of our college students are attracted to the ring. It gives unwarranted exaltation to the material side of life.

I was one of those simple-minded Victorians schooled to think that statesmanship and public service were the big things. Why, we even thought that success in life was the reward of mental and moral training, of dignity and character and personality. Conkling and Blaine and Hoar and Garfield and Cleveland were our ideals. We got our inspiration from such misled and commonplace folk as Dickens, Thackeray, Whittier, Holmes, Emerson, Gladstone, Lincoln, Edwin Booth, Tommaso Salvini, and Henry Irving. What else could we do? The new luminaries had not arrived. We had no D. H. Lawrence, no Aldous Huxley, no Caldwell, no Babe Ruth, no Jack Dempsey, no Ely Culbertson, and our theaters were very different.

We simpletons of that remote time got the notion that a scrupulous rectitude was necessary to success.

There were no robbed and bankrupt cities, no Al Capones, no Dillingers, no Lucianos, no corrupt bankers in our time. We did have our Boss Tweed, but he promptly got what was coming to him. His infamy shocked the world, and as my father was wont to say, everyone "cussed and spit when he spoke of him." We clung to our old notion of the things we called "right" and "wrong."

Suddenly, a new star was shining in the European sky. It was the German philosopher Nietzsche, with his opinion that the only big thing was power that could trample down the weak and that the superman who had power and the will to use it was the man worth while. Napoleon Bonaparte, who had crashed through Europe with his armies, scattering death and destruction, was his great ideal. Central Europe embraced this philosophy. Cer-

tain of our newspapers and magazines advertised it in a tone of awe.

It was a new idea, and coming as it did from a European court favorite with an outlandish name, many concluded that it must be the real thing. Everything from Europe looked good. True, he spent a part of his life in an asylum for the insane, but half the world seemed to be in a like trouble. His philosophy was, in the slang of today, nuts for the nutty.

William II, with an empire more powerful than any the world had seen, endorsed the idea. He was said to be the biggest man on earth, and the church of Germany seemed to fall in line behind him.

Many of our college professors gave their approval to the ravings of this lunatic philosopher. They called him "brilliant." No great voices of authority were raised against him.

We began to see that our old notions of right and wrong were doomed; that those of Gladstone, Tennyson, Lincoln, and others had been booked for the junk pile.

I had many a talk with my friend Hamlin Garland about this looming and prodigious thought that cast a shadow into the remote future. It astonished and worried us. We began to fight for the old ideals on the platform, in essays and books, but with little effect. Soon the great nations were hurling their power against each other in a World War. It was indeed the big thing. Compared with it property was nothing and human life of no more account than a hill of pismires.

One curious phenomenon of the war had attracted my attention. The chief champion of Power was very careful not to have it applied to himself or his family. Neither William II nor any one of his six sons had a scratch on them. I called attention to this fact in some lines

that traveled far, under the title: "The Carefullest Man in the World."

The war ended and Nietzsche's big idea began to bear fruit of a rather bitter taste. Certain bright young men said to themselves: "If power that crushes the other fellow is the one great thing, I'll go into business with it. I'll use the power in an automatic pistol to make my living and the power in a motorcar to get away with it." For a long time they achieved astonishing success.

Yes, people had brains, but common sense was going out of use. It was unfashionable. It was unpopular. The big thing was university sense, professorial sense with a lot of dictionary words in it. What was the old school of experience compared with that? True, Franklin, Washington, and Lincoln had got their learning in that old school, but we were living in a new world. Nietzsche was the flower of Germanic culture. No American boy's education was quite complete without a degree from a German university. We should not forget that America was founded on common sense—a common sense of right and wrong that was not permitted to be publicly expressed in Europe.

Now another Germanic flower of culture began to dominate the scene, viz., Sigmund Freud. He said, in effect, that no one should be going about with suppressed desires on his person. The suppression hindered growth and development. Moral inhibitions were vicious and false.

Here was the license that many were longing for. They leaped into the arms of this philosophy and kissed and embraced it. They laughed at the ridiculous codes of the Victorian era. Divorces multiplied. Children to whom man and wife were irrevocably committed did not deter them. Children might be disgraced and abandoned, at least partially, but desires were not to be suppressed.



Suppose you got a desire to murder someone? They did not stop to think of such difficulties. Thinking had gone out of fashion. Thinking was a bore. Leave that to the professors who had nothing else to do. Americans were busy making and spending money. They had enough to do.

Harlotized heroines and bovine rakes appeared on the stage.

The sex novel, which for a time had been hidden under the mattress, became popular. It was out in the sunlight of prosperity.

The critics said that it was a part of life, and therefore admissible. Well, so were the sewers under Manhattan Island a part of life. They were covered up for sanitary reasons. How about the moral health of the world? Even ministers and college professors were telling us not to worry about that. Morality, the clean life, and even religion had become a joke to many people. Men and women in fashionable life feathered their arrows of wit with vile profanity.

It should be clear to all that fashionable folk set the pace for other people who are still climbing. I remember a time when Edward VII was behaving in a manner that shocked the conservative element in the British aristocracy. It was rather shameful. Certain fashionable folk in our leading cities, who worshiped the British court, began to fashion their own behavior after that of the king and his satellites. It was the "smart" thing to do. The temptation to imitate those to whom we have to look upward is very great.

The church was waning. Many pews were empty. The pulpit no longer appealed to young men of parts. Still, we old-timers thought the church a noble institu-

tion allied to great verities. We had that one leg to stand upon.

George Bernard Shaw arrived. He was a man of wit who became a fashionable diversion. He said that the church had no ground to stand upon. Its sanctities were therefore bunk.

Ridicule is a formidable weapon. Often people accept its verdict because they do not like to think. That takes time and trouble. Many have never acquired the thinking habit. To them the blows of a humorist are like those of John L. Sullivan and Jack Dempsey. They end the argument.

It seemed that we of the old time were all at sea. Our last leg was gone. Nietzsche and Freud and Shaw, it seemed to us, had turned the world into a great heap of rubbish. It was not their fault. Not one of them had made out a case worthy of the serious attention of any man of good sense. True, Nietzsche had converted William II of Germany. But William was at best a man of an unbalanced intellect and, mainly, the converts of Freud had misplaced minds.

Mr. Shaw never had an idea in his life that he clearly expressed. We ought not to blame him. He never was a reasonable human being. He can play many parts, but not that one. No sane person could ever agree with his judgments. He favored the plans of Germany to violate its treaties and grab France and England. He declared the Soviet government the most perfect on earth, and we know it to be the blackest despotism. He never did and never could explain his mental attitude. He is just a merry jester and gives no reasons. He takes a lonely and unique position likely to attract the attention of the world. He had been a great advertiser and his work is worth while only because of its verbal dexterity.

A good part of America was like the road to Mandalay. There wa'n't no Ten Commandments and there was a universal thirst. Even boys and girls got tipsy at the big house parties.

The strumpeters were blowing taps for the seventh commandment.

Sunday was a day for picnics, merrymaking, and high speed. Solemn thoughts came only when blood was flowing after a collision. There were little pools of it on many roads.

Certain newspapers were museums of reported murders, adulteries, kidnappings, and robberies. A great many people had ceased to suppress their desires. The racketeer was flourishing.

The name of the Savior was used mainly to enrich the diction of the parlor and the dining room in many fashionable houses, even by honorable men and women with the highest respect for law and order.

It is the age of invention and certain people have invented a new moral to take the place of the old complicated system. One moral is like keeping a bee. It costs little. No contributions. A bed is better than a pew to sleep in. A person can get along with only one commandment: Be your own God and don't worry. That was the one moral.

I am not a pious man. I am slow to speak ill of any person. I believe in a Supreme Being for whom I find in myself a sense of responsibility. I quarrel with no one who does not agree with me. I try to find something good in people. Almost my only vocal religious argument is my way of living. I enjoy health and strength, to which my years do not quite entitle me, and the affection of many friends. I love honor and justice and good faith. These

are the bone and sinew of good character, and what are we without that? Its very foundation is good morals.

Now, a church is or ought to be nothing more or less than a place where men and women can find help in their great personal problems—a place to take serious thought of them and where wise counsel should be found. One ought to get real help there.

But a time had come when many people had no taste for serious thought. The growth of wealth and leisure had made fun their great objective.

For this reason and for others which I have tried to indicate America had come to parlous times.

Many excellent folk dare not live here because their lives or those of their children have been threatened.

It seems to be true that since human desires were liberated and the old codes were torn up with the pickax and hauled away, something has happened akin to throwing open the sewers of Manhattan Island. The moral health of our people has been impaired and, after all, it is a thing to be looked after. It is indeed the main thing—bigger even than all our riches.

Now I must give my view of what human life means to me. We, of the civilized world, are a great fighting legion. We are enlisted in an endless war of the spirit—not of the sword and gun—although at times it may need their help. If this is not true, life is little more than a merry jest—a world full of chattering monkeys.

One who has the good luck to live the life of a healthy boy, as I did, will be likely to agree with my theory. Boys are like the nomad tribesmen of old. They repeat the history of olden days. They have a revengeful spirit and the love of rival combat and of adventure. It is Nature's way of preparing them for the great fight. Every boy must have a hero—a leader. If his father is not his

great hero it is almost surely the father's fault, if he be a strong man. The duties of that job should not be slighted or deputed. It is better even than being chairman of the board of a great corporation.

The battle I knew on the old farm with roots and weeds and stumps and rocks and stones is a symbol of the interminable war of life. Poverty is only one of many enemies. It is perhaps the least of them in the great army of Destructive Passions. First one has to fight and master his own passions. Uncontrolled, they become the enemies of all law and order, of health and happiness. They are what is called "evil." We are in an unending war, first, with the evil in ourselves and, second, with the evil in others. These two are the chief staff officers in the great army of our familiar enemies, of which the commander in chief is greed.

There are people who think themselves out of danger far behind the lines. For generations they have enjoyed ease and prosperity. They have made friends with the enemy. They have no fear, no knowledge of the battle. They say that fighting is only for common folk. Suddenly they hear the roar of the guns. Shells crash through the roofs and walls of their houses. They are out in the danger zone. So it was with Louis XVI and his court when the storm broke in Versailles. So it was with the Russian czar and his court.

Always when the world has forgotten that it is at war and, in conceit and self-satisfaction, has laid aside its weapons and deserted the field, it has been rudely turned from its folly by a sudden opening of the gates of hell.

In the first forty years of my life I learned one thing thoroughly. It was to respect the power of printed words. I had felt it in the books of the great masters. It had helped me to shape my life. I had seen it molding the

opinions of men as they read the newspapers. The cause of our critical situation lies wholly in printed words. First those of the degenerate Nietzsche exalting power and the superman above all other things. The weak were of small account. They were to be crushed. This Teuton thought entered the soul of Central Europe and the great Teutonic power engine began to grow until its creators decided that it was capable of crushing the world.

For years the church in Austria and Germany, overawed by emperors, would seem to have forgotten that it was a fighting machine and that the time had come for battle. It is, however, a question whether the church in Europe ever can be a real fighting machine, being more or less subject to the will of an emperor or a dictator.

I think that the main troubles of Europe were due to princes who were never spanked. I fear that the Hapsburgs and Hohenzollerns had been a little careless. Of course, they had had no chance to read Mrs. Roosevelt's articles on bringing up the young. Many American women could have told them how to do it. Those princes were prepared to be the partners of God, and the chances are that the Almighty was not consulted in the matter.

They had to carry around a sense of inherited superiority that stuck out like a load of hay. They needed a band of adulators to keep them happy. What was the nation but an emperor, his court, and a big stock of gun fodder? How many of those men and women have had their superiority removed and thrown on the junk heap? Like an appendix, it had got sore and painful. It would have been unnecessary if those young men had learned what life is all about.

I have observed, coming up the long road, that the man who is too great to learn is going downhill, looking up at the sky, with banana peels in his path.

It seems to me that our own troubles are partly due to the fact that our church had ceased to be an effective fighting machine. It has had no emperor, no dictator to hinder it. This also is true: it has lacked unity of purpose and adequate generalship.

One has to make allowances for the Protestant faith so foolishly divided by differences unimportant to the main issue, which is the difference with Satan.

Still, the time of Beecher and Talmage and Chapin and Storrs is past. The mighty wings of a great spirit carried their words across the continent. They were able organizers. They were fighting men. They used their power to keep the politics of the city, the state and the nation above reproach. An immoral book or a vicious play would have had a fight with them and their committees. As a reporter I knew all these men—except Chapin—and I am sure that each was a civilizing force of a nation-wide influence.

For years ministers have been expected to keep out of politics. Unless they kept their hands off they were likely to make enemies for the church. Indeed, enemies of the church were the chief reason for its existence. It had become afraid even of scandals in the city government. Social conditions were going bad, but if there were any special slip from grace, relatives in the church of those concerned would be hurt. So ministers had to do long-range fighting with sin as a general proposition, without hitting anyone. They were shackled, and I am slow to blame them.

But pussyfooting in the pulpit had become a fact. Now, my friend Robert Norwood was a great preacher. The last time I heard him, at St. Bartholomew's, he announced that he must have \$90,000 within a month to meet certain items of expense. It is such needs that weaken

the pulpiteer. He has to step carefully—too carefully for a fighting man. There was nothing like that in the days of my youth.

When I was a boy in Canton, New York, the church I went to was crowded every Sunday. So was that of the Presbyterians across the park. Their ministers were men of learning and eloquence. The last time I went to my church there were seventeen people in the pews. That was two years ago. I was told that there had been a like falling off in the attendance at the Presbyterian church. Are the motorcar and the love of fun responsible for this great change?

If character is really the big thing in this world of ours, ought we not to be sure that our schools and colleges are doing their full duty in developing it? Should not all our teachers be committed to the fundamental ideals of America? We are a nation apart; have we not learned that the national morals of Europe are not for us?

Why have we professors who endorse the philosophies of Nietzsche and Freud?

Why are we graduating so many atheists and communists? Is it because our boys are not well schooled in sound Americanism? How can we sell that to them unless it is well advertised in their hearing? I fear that in many classrooms quite the opposite thing is advertised.

Let us give the young intellectual freedom, but our professors should be hired to teach sound Americanism and only that. The opinions of the young depend largely on the teacher's work.

In spite of the fact that I feel as young as ever, I have to admit that I am seventy-eight years of age. I have spoken of many shadows in the forepath of humanity, yet I am a cheerful optimist.

After all, rough and hard as my way has been, and



imperfect as it is, I like the world we live in. The great, vital things filled with the sacrifice and wisdom of the innumerable dead are not easily moved. Their foundations are deep and wide. Above them the ages have slowly added their deposits of wise revision which are like the gigantic runes of geology.

Races disintegrate, nations rise and fall, believer and unbeliever, saint and scoffer go quickly to the dust. The praying, the playing, and the laughter sink into silence, but the stronghold of the ages still lifts its towers and still we hear the calling of its solemn bells.

It seems to be the one imperishable thing. It is no joke. At times the great caravan turns away from it only to come back, because it satisfies a need of the human spirit.

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## 28. LAST HORIZON

I HAVE used a phrase which I need to explain even for my own benefit. It is "the growing revelation of life."

My ruling passion as a boy was, I judge, like that of other boys: the love of my parents and my brothers and sisters. They were the great people. I would have put my life in peril for any of them. One by one they were taken from me. My home seemed to be on still water, for a time, and suddenly I discovered that it was only part of a stream forever flowing onward. Slowly I learned that there were candidates for my affection who did not belong to my family. I thought of the kindly, sympathetic neighbors, and of the great men of the village who were my heroes. There were also certain humble folk for whom I had a real affection: a hired man and a hired woman of the family who had shown me great kindness in my childhood; our Irish washerwoman who used to sing and dance at the tub for my entertainment; Pat Devlin, a bighearted man with whom I worked on a job as a boy of sixteen to get money with which to go to a fourth of July celebration. When I met him in after years, with a look of joy he would say:

"Ah, God bless ye, boy! Do ye mind the time we worked together under Boss McCormick?"

The boss himself was a dear, good fellow. I acquired a love for all kinds of people. There were, of course, drunkards, loafers, and bad boys in the village. They interested me and I knew them, but with a mother like

mine I couldn't have been a scamp if I had tried. She knew her job.

The mother of John Wesley was one of the most successful mothers England has known. She had nineteen children. Such mass production in a family must have an able and a patient intellect to look after it through all the changing stages of its development. The professor of homiletics at Yale says, in one of his brilliant lectures, that on the day when each child arrived at the age of five it learned from its mother the alphabet and the meaning of the word "must."

It is a highly important word. One has to learn its meaning soon or late and the sooner the better. When I forgot it I suffered, and generally a deeper pain than one may get from a switch or a slipper.

When my mother and I were reading *David Copperfield* together, I felt that I knew people like Ham and Peggotty and Em'ly and Steerforth.

Fortunately, I had found a new passion. It was literature. The romantic passion had come along but, as it insisted on my relinquishment of a big life plan, it had to be put down. There was a struggle.

Three of my brothers and a sister had gone when I left college and went to New York. What a sore spirit was in me! Less than a year later my father passed the barrier.

Soon I was in the dawn of the first great revelation of life. Its light shone brighter as I lived on. A boy's family teaches him only the beginning of love. He must discover other people who are quite as worthy of it.

Then came a great piece of good fortune. Often I think that I owe to it most of the little I have done. I found a wise and gentle young lady willing to bear with my faults and to struggle along with me up the steep,

tiresome hill of poverty, and of work not to my liking. That hill was so long and my errors so many that I did not get to my chosen task until I was forty years of age—an unfortunate fact for me.

What an inspiration I found in my wife's help and sympathy, and in the delightful homes of her making! For forty years our love for each other grew. This is the great fact in the whole matter. I would sooner have died than have broken the faith we gave to each other.

She helped me on my way to the things of which I have written.

Not long after our marriage I wrote this sentence, now copied from one of my notebooks:

"Go find your brothers in the world and see that these be many, for a man's strength is multiplied by the number of his brothers."

It suggested my study of the growing spirit of a man in *Darrel of the Blessed Isles*.

The stream of life flows onward—forever onward—and many are caught in its whirlpools and disappear. It may even separate us from our savings or our wealth. One can, if he will, get a fairly good map of this great river and study its currents, rapids, and many points of peril and be a reasonably successful navigator. He can get and give help among those who are keeping their heads above water near him.

There are even points in the stream which no one could foresee. Here is a man who was picked up, after the *Titanic* was near her doom, saying: "I was one of many floating around in icy water and asking God for help. Men and women were seizing each other and going down. A man near me shouted, 'Brother, help me!' as he sank. Suddenly what a change had come upon us! We had been

so different—the great and the humble—but we were all brothers now. Those tragic moments of suffering gave me a better understanding of human life. Are we not all brothers floating among the perpetual tragedies on the great stream flowing toward eternity?”

I have found many brothers and my own, if they had lived, could not have been kinder or more generous.

I am sorry for those so situated that they have not known the courage, the kindness, and the generosity of humble folk. This knowledge is a help in broadening one's understanding and sympathies. I am not quite sure that the church would approve my feeling that the love of God is the love of man.

I believe that the first thing God will want to know about us is how many brothers we have found in this world and what we have done for them. Probably He will think those outside the church more important even than those who are in the fold.

There is one master key which opens all doors. It is not simply character or honor or religious ardor. Many have these good things who do not possess the master key. It is a spirit given to the love of humanity and having a steadfast, enlightened will to serve it. It may be baffled for a time, it may even win the crown of martyrdom, but always and inevitably it lifts the soul that has it to masterful doing and wins its great reward. There, if anywhere, one gets the help of God.

Young man, you may go in for politics, law, or medicine, but without this will and spirit your work will be small in spite of the fact that it may bring a large reward in money. I would not have you think that I undervalue money. It is a common need, and Mr. Rockefeller showed us how to make it a source of help and comfort to

his fellow men. How often I have seen it used for the ruin of many a good man and his friends! I have seen it speeding certain distinguished families down the long hill of pleasure to nothingness. They were families founded on the rock of patient toil.

One of the happiest old men I have known was Mr. Rockefeller, often up to the most playful tricks with his young great-grandchildren, at ninety-four. At ninety-three he was still active in the direction of his great affairs. He was then a keen-minded man. He would writhe with merriment at a funny story.

He played six holes of golf a day, ate little, and lived simply. Every evening after dinner he played, at the dinner table, a game with numbered cards. The guests and the members of the family each took a hand. Often he would playfully toss dimes to certain players as a reward for their skill.

Here was one of the very few who could show his fellow men what to do and how to do it. William G. Sumner said in one of his lectures that such a man takes rank with the great generals of history.

As we grow old, what a change in our sense of values! We still need money but it grows cheaper as age advances. Our pleasures are simple and inexpensive. We have had enough of feasting at the banquet. A tramp in the sunlight with a jolly friend, a highball, a comfortable chair with a good book, and we are content.

One often hears the warning: "You can't take it with you," but the one and only big piece of property that man may possess will surely go with him when he goes. That is, a personality that has been a help to the world in which it was made. If it be loved here, it will be loved there even more.

Surely the great hearts of Lincoln, Cardinal Newman, and Sir Moses Montefiore are busy somewhere.

In time life gives us another revelation. We find that traditions and proverbs have an undying truth in them, while the young are apt to think of them as "old-time bunk."

Still, we old men know that riches and power depart suddenly; that you marry in haste and repent at leisure; that pride goes before a fall, and that a decent regard for thrift would save many people an immense amount of wretchedness. G. K. Chesterton once said that he had lived to see dead proverbs come to life like the stone snakes of Egypt. I suspect that the World War may have helped to inspire this remark.

As to fear of the future, I think that the young are afflicted with more of that trouble than the old. Their future is full of uncertainty and peril. They need all the courage they can get, for more or less discouragement and despair must be met and overcome. So many that I knew were turned into cannon fodder, so many have been utterly wrecked by the perils of peace. For more than fifty years they have been lying in their graves.

The young of a sensitive nature are afflicted by self-consciousness, shyness, and often by the memory of their gaucheries. They are often rash and they suffer much for things they ought not to have done. They are likely to be intolerant. We learn slowly, as the years flow by, how easy it is to be wrong. We develop a gentle toleration even for the misguided. The slow pace of history should give us all as we grow old some little share of the divine patience.

If we grow old gracefully, our conceit departs. The tyranny of convention relaxes its hold upon us. At last

we have the right to refuse to be bored and we approach the last horizon with a far more cheerful courage than did the gladiators of old Rome who; as they passed the praetor, were wont to salute him and say:

*"Morituri te salutamus."*









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